

**Community**  **Impact**



# Evaluating Programmes and Services

# Introduction

In this presentation, we look at...

- **How** to get *data* out of your service
- **Which** methods and why
- **About** collecting data
- **What** to do with it
- **Some** Research Ethics you'll need to know.. (not GDPR!)

# CASE STUDY...



Meet **Mary**...

Mary is the CEO of a charity, **Youth Employability'**



We'll be going through Mary's thought process about evaluation... **what** she does and **why**



## About Youth Employability

... 4 staff, 10 volunteers

... Delivers a grant-funded youth employability programme (3 funders)



## About Youth Employability

... Works with **vulnerable** young people in a community-based youth setting led by key workers and volunteers

... Has a strong safeguarding policy and research ethics policy that puts the young person **at the heart** of the evaluation process (Voluntary; Informed Consent)

... is '**Evaluation Ready**' (Mary has got something (**outcomes**) to **measure**, and something to **collect data** with!

# A technical bit...

... If you were at the first session you'll know that...

1. You need to think about outcomes before you ask questions
2. This is a data quality issue
3. It helps Mary and others to write questions...

So...

# Here are Youth Employability's Outcomes

... They have 7 outcomes:

1. Creativity
2. Communication
3. Relationships and Leadership
4. Resilience
5. Confidence and Agency
6. Managing Feelings
7. Planning and Problem Solving

# Here are Youth Employability's Outcomes

... For each they have asked...

1. What does X mean to us
2. What would we expect to see if the outcome was being achieved!

This gives us a set of indicators for each outcome...

So...



# Here are Youth Employability's Outcomes



Creativity	Communication	Relationships and Leadership	Resilience	Confidence and Agency	Managing Feelings	Planning and Problem Solving
The young person can express themselves in a range of activities	The young person becomes more confident in telling others what they think, and how they feel	The young person actively seeks input from others to deliver their plans	The young person is persistent in meeting challenges	The young person can make and take decisions for themselves through discussion with peers and mentors	The young person can emotionally adapt to change in their lives	The young person can set and pursue realistic goals based on their skills, abilities, and interests
The young person can articulate what they mean, and use creative activities to communicate this to others	The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others	The young person supports others in achieving their goals	The young person can avoid negative peer influences	The young person can focus on goals and the steps required to achieve them	The young person understands that change can be positive	The young person is able to identify sources of external support - including peers and staff - to enable them to address problems in their lives
The young person is able use creative forums to explore new solutions to problems they face	The young person can reach a consensus on ideas and action through dialogue	The young person can take the lead in order to deliver joint work with others	The young person can critically discuss the choices they make	The young person understands their strengths and can harness these in pursuit of their goals	The young person can form positive and inclusive relationships with others	The young person identifies the skills and capabilities they need to make their plans work

# Our working outcome...

## Communication

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... **survey question...**



# So far, so good for Mary...

... But here is where it gets more tricky...

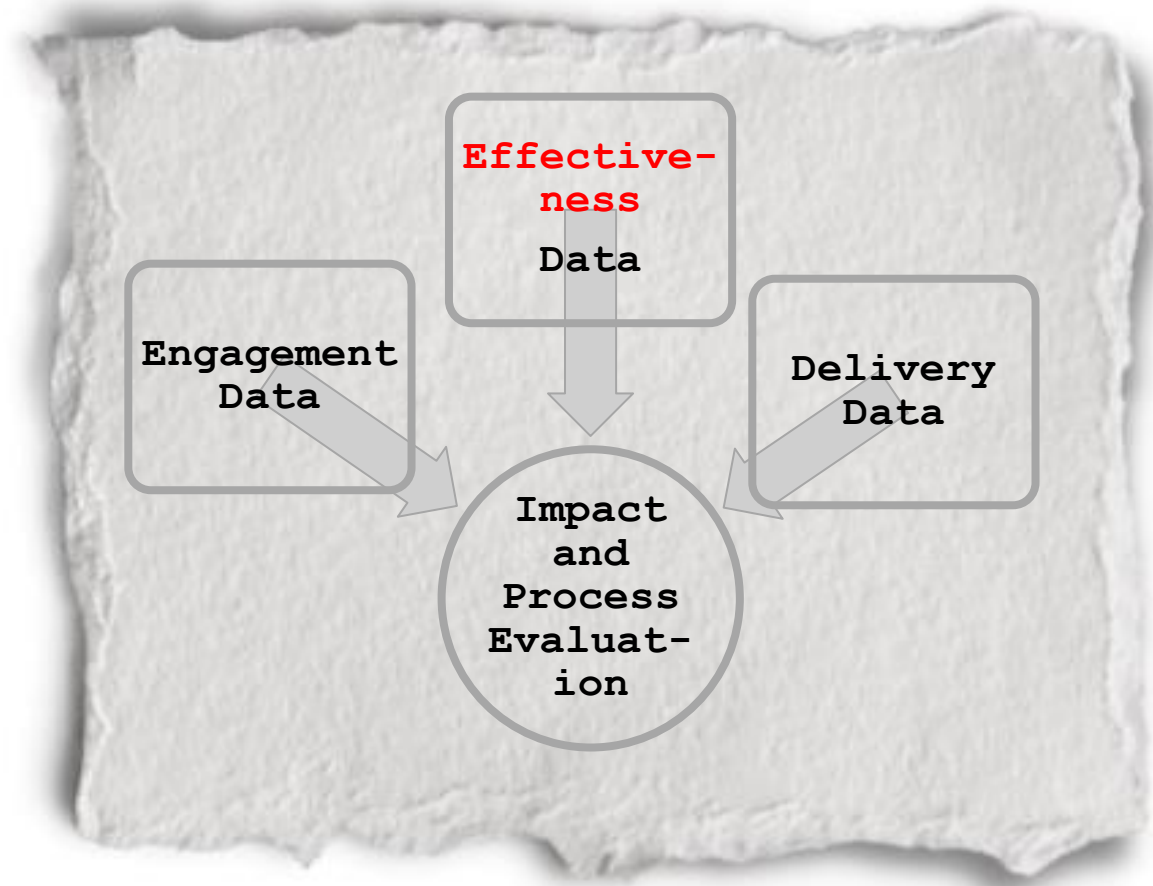
Overall, for Mary there are **three** basic types of data an evaluation of Youth Employability's services can generate...

So... which one? What informs her decision... Is she ready to do an impact evaluation?

Here's why she might not be...



# Decisions, decisions...



# What data does Mary need?



➤ Evaluation is about getting data out of a service or a programme

➤ But there are several types of data, and different approaches to collecting it...

➤ So, Mary now faces her first challenge...

➤ Every time she holds an employability session...

➤ WHY? EVERYONE LEAVES EARLY!



➤ So... She'll first do a PROCESS EVALUATION...

➤ She'll do this because poor delivery can get in the way of impact (if it's there!)



# 'Process' Evaluation

- Process evaluations look at DELIVERY and ENGAGEMENT...
  - For example, if Mary's service users don't like her volunteers, or can't get to the delivery setting, then it can't begin to be effective...
  - On paper, services can look great, but if delivered badly, this can limit impact...
- ... She can also ASK about the service user's ability to engage with the service...
- So, Mary can ASK about the ability of staff to deliver the service...
- So, Mary will use QUALITATIVE methods (interviews in this case) to find this out...



# More decisions...

➤ Mary also has to decide on which Method – and why?

Qualitative	Quantitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus groups</li><li>• Interviews</li><li>• Case studies</li><li>• Action Research/participation</li><li>• Vox pops</li><li>• Video Diaries</li><li>• Graffiti boards</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surveys</li><li>• Assessment questionnaires</li></ul>

➤ Let's assume that she does this, fixes things, and can move on to an impact evaluation...

**...We need to make it easier for Mary...**



# Making it easier for Mary...



➤ To help her decide, Mary can ask two basic questions...

(1) what does she want to know?

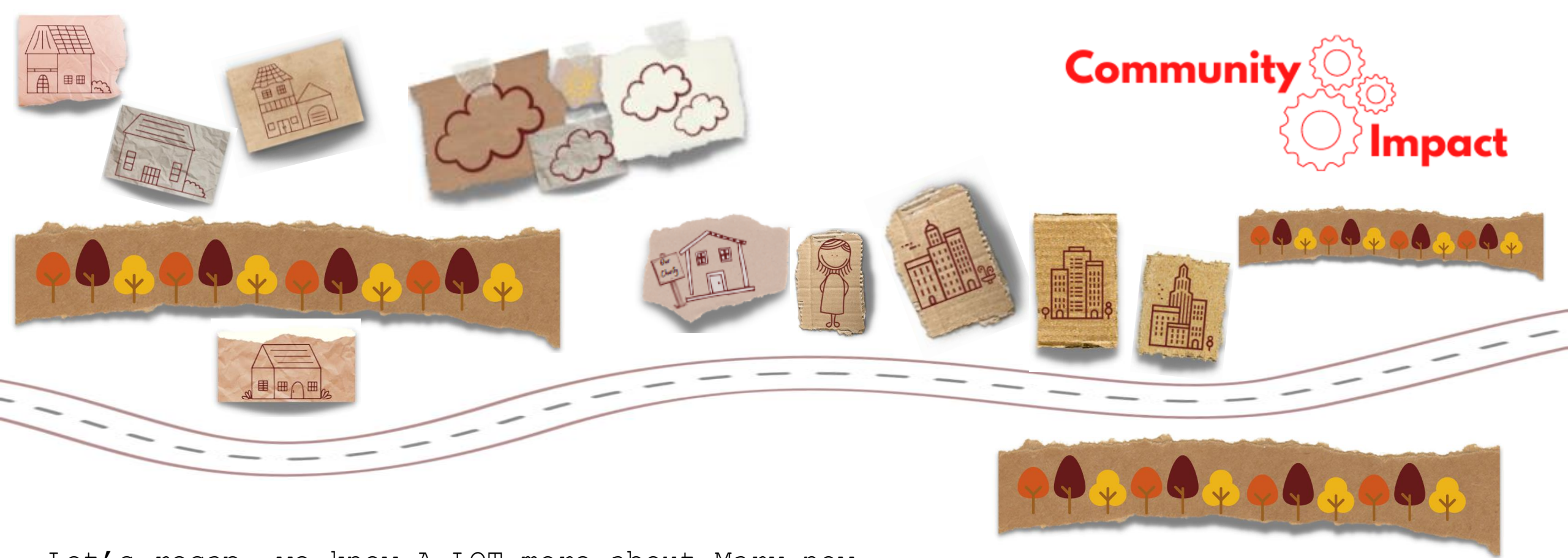
(2) what will she do with the data

➤ Why would we ask this...?

➤ because the data we can get from a service tells us different things about it







Let's recap... we know A LOT more about Mary now...

(1) Mary is **EVALUATION READY...** She understands the delivery challenges (process evaluation) ... and is ready to move onto impact...

(2) She has measures in place... and tools at the ready (survey in this case.. )



(3) and there are some **qualitative** and **quantitative** methods open to her...

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- In programme FUN activities
- Individual telephone interviews...

**It All depends on  
those two questions:**

# Activity 1 - Asking the right questions

- (1) You're Mary!
- (2) No evaluation has been undertaken for 3 years ...
- (3) ASK... What do you want to know?
- (4) Come up with as many questions you might want to ask...
- (5) Think about which are impact, process, delivery, or other?
- (6) Pick one of each for discussion
- (7) Think about **why you want the data...**
- (8) We'll talk about this - so TAKE NOTES!



# Some more about Mary...



- So... Mary has thought about this herself, and wants to know...

Does Youth Employability's core employability programme increase young people's basic life skills?

- As a research/Evaluation question, it's an '**operationally useful**' one



# So... what's next?



- We're doing an impact evaluation - so we're looking at **effectiveness** (remember our three types of data!)
- We have a question - we need to think carefully about how to collect data for this
- Mary has a lot of outcomes...
- we'll focus on our single example: **Communication**
- So... from here on we're going to take a step-by-step approach to Mary's data collection on this one outcome



# This is how it works...



- Mary needs to decide on her data collection method...
- She works with a particularly **vulnerable** group of young people (some ex-offenders, former LAC, etc)
- This is where we start to look at research ETHICS
- Our service users face a lot of people with clipboards, and ongoing assessments
- Risk of empowerment issues, fatigue (charities not labs!)
- So... doesn't want to over-rely on long surveys



# This is how it works...



- Mary Decides on a mixed-methods approach
- Her evaluation team designs a **short** pre-, and post-programme survey **PLUS** a small group discussion during their employability sessions
- They then start to write a survey...
- They also begin to think about the discussion topic she wants to use
- We'll look at this next... but first...



# Activity 2

## what does this mean for YOU?



- (1) You know the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches
- (2) But which methods should **you** choose and why.. Pick two:
- (3) Interviews; surveys; focus groups; fun activities; Observation (just looking and taking notes!)...
- (4) Why do you think might be useful for your work?
- (5) why would you pick them over others?
- (6) What lessons are there for Mary?





# Mary's evaluation strategy...



- We've introduced the **Mixed-Methods** approach
- We know Mary is using a survey **AND** focus group..
- We know that questions **NEED TO LINK** to outcomes!
- **BUT**... how to get from one to the other?
- It's a **BIG** question!



# So... Here's our outcome



Our outcome:

## Communication

...and an example indicator:

'The young person can **express original opinions, plans, and activities**, and **discuss** these with others'



# Here's how Mary got it...



**Pick and  
Define  
Outcome**

The young person can  
express original  
opinions, plans, and  
activities, and discuss  
these with others

**... survey  
question...**

First, Mary established the areas where  
she wanted to see change happen...

... and asked 'what does this mean to an  
employability charity?'



# Here's how Mary got it...



## Communication

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... survey question...

For instance, Mary chooses **communication** as one of her outcomes...

... and for her, it means the ability to talk to others about work...



# Here's how Mary got it...



## Communication

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... survey question...

... She then asks 'what would we expect to see' if the outcome was being met. Again, this ensures that data will be relevant to the programmes being evaluated



# Here's how Mary got it...



## Communication

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... survey question...

Second, she uses the indicators to inform any questions we ask in surveys, interviews, or focus groups. This ensures that data, and the analysis of it, measures each outcome.



# Here's how Mary got it...

## Communication

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... survey question...

...This guarantees that we're measuring what we set out to measure - we call this 'Internal Validity'



# Now Mary needs to write good survey questions...



- ... we can match questions to outcomes... but there are many different ways of ASKING them...
  - **Scale** Questions (ordinal; Categorical; Ratio)
  - **Multiple Choice** (obvious!)
  - **Binary** (Yes/No) questions
  - **Ranking** questions
  - **Open** questions
- Asking in the right way can make surveys short!
- (...and still give you great data)





Here's Mary's  
indicator again:

The young  
person can  
express  
original  
opinions,  
plans, and  
activities, and  
discuss these  
with others



# First Question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

**Can you** express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others?

**Yes/No/Don't Know**



# A BINARY question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... Methodologically, this gives VIRTUALLY NO INFORMATION...

... asking these takes up space and leads to really long and BORING surveys...



# Second Question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

On a scale of 1-7, **to what extent** do you think you can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



# A Scale question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... Using Likert Scales can give you more information...

... asking these is a good way of measuring progress and change (if you do it twice)



# Third Question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

**Please tell us** how you express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others?

Answer here:



# An Open question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... These are great if you think respondents will fill them out.

... Don't assume and if you do get data you'll have to CODE it...



# Fourth Question...

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

**Which** of the following statements **best describes you?**

I **NEVER** express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

I **SOMETIMES** express original opinions, plans, and activities, but **DON'T** discuss these with others

I **ALWAYS** express original opinions, plans, and activities, but **HATE** to discuss these with others





A 'you decide'  
question...

The young  
person can  
express  
original  
opinions,  
plans, and  
activities, and  
discuss these  
with others

... these are NOMINAL questions  
and function like yes/No...

... It forces  
respondents to  
make a choice... if  
the choices are  
badly thought  
out, it affects  
the data...



# ...Face to Face

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

We could ask...

Tell us about your **experiences** talking to others about a project you have worked on...



# ...Face to Face

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... This is an UNSTRUCTURED question ...

... It's like an open question in a survey... you'll get lots of data, but will have to make sense of it



# ...Face to Face

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

We could ask...

Who **finds it difficult** opening up to other people about their plans and projects?

We can also probe... Can you tell us some of the ways this has been a challenge?



# ...Face to Face

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... This is a SEMI-STRUCTURED question ...

... It gives the evaluator MORE FOCUSSED data, but means that they might miss something interesting...



# ...Face to Face

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

We could ask...

**Hands up** if you have experienced challenges when talking to others?

Can you give an example of this?



# ...Face to Face

The young person can express original opinions, plans, and activities, and discuss these with others

... This is a STRUCTURED question

... It functions like a survey question in that it's like reading of a questionnaire and recording answers



# Activity 3

(1) For the **communication indicator**, write THREE Survey questions.

- One Scale Question
- One Nominal/Yes-No question
- One open question

(2) Then write one question you'd ask in a group!





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**Thank You!**