

**Shephard &
Moyes Ltd**

**PLAN
DO
REVIEW**

London Youth

Quality Mark

Evaluation report – November 2015



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY

Foreword

London Youth

For young people to thrive, grow in skills and confidence, build strong networks and have fun, it is essential that what they experience in the space outside of the family and school is high quality, focused on their needs, and supports them in genuinely positive ways.

The London Youth Quality Mark is our way of supporting youth workers and organisations to ensure that their practice, processes and provision are the best and most appropriate they can be for the young people they engage. Over the last 7 years we've helped over 200 organisations across London to achieve accreditation through the Quality Mark. During that time we've updated the standard, and with our partners City & Guilds and Ambition, have done our best to keep the framework valid and relevant.

Now, involving the organisations we work with and a range of other stakeholders, we have taken the step of evaluating the impact and value of the quality mark, to ensure that it reflects not only best practice, but also the ever changing pattern of young people's needs. This report presents the outcome of that process of evaluation.

Some highlights of what is in the main an extremely positive evaluation include:

- *Youth workers feel more proud of their work, and more confident that they can make a difference to young people having gone through the Quality Mark accreditation process*
- *Achieving the Quality Mark has helped many organisations attract new funding – in some cases at significant levels*
- *The process of gathering evidence and preparing for assessment helps organisations to open up new partnership and delivery opportunities*

For us there was also some learning about what we could do better: the reaccreditation process needs to evolve; the way we engage young people in the assessments requires broader thought; and we need to better use new technology for gathering and storing evidence. All of these are helpful pointers. A final crucial piece of learning is the need for further external recognition of and investment in the Quality Mark, and those organisations who achieve it. The John Lyon's Charity through their long-term support, and the City Bridge Trust through the hugely valuable cash incentive they offer to clubs achieving the silver or gold standard have led the way.

We want more funders to reward and recognise the Quality Mark as a badge of excellence; and more local authorities to recognise it as a mark of high quality provision. The funding environment is tough for youth organisations – and so it is vital that funders invest scarce resources in work that will have the most chance of offering effective support to young people. We hope that this positive evaluation persuades more funders and local authorities to commit their support.

I would like to thank The John Lyon's Charity for generously funding this evaluation and believing in the value of good youth work; and Shephard & Moyes for their excellent and sensitive work in consulting organisations and for writing this report. And of course we extend a huge thanks to the many youth workers in London who've worked hard to achieve the Quality Mark and continue to achieve amazing outcomes for young Londoners.



Jim Minton

Director of Membership and Communications, London Youth

John Lyon's Charity

John Lyon's Charity is a grant-giving charity that awards grants for the benefit of children and young people. We have supported London Youth to develop and deliver the Quality Mark since 2011. As a funder of youth provision across nine London boroughs, we champion organisations that deliver high quality work, so that young people can achieve the best possible outcomes. We are proud that 38 organisations in the Charity's Beneficial Area are currently accredited with the London Youth Quality Mark, and that a further 25 are engaged in the process.

We know that youth organisations that achieve the London Youth Quality Mark are well-placed to provide excellent services that have a lasting effect on communities. This evaluation confirms the Quality Mark's value to youth clubs as they report feeling more financially sustainable and with a greater sense of confidence, morale and pride in the work they deliver.

A tool such as the Quality Mark, which meets the needs of youth clubs and youth work providers at a time when resources are increasingly scarce, is critical. John Lyon's Charity is proud to lead the way and hopes that other funders will recognise the rigour and hard work that youth clubs undertake to achieve the qualification, and the significance it holds as a trusted badge of excellence.



Susan Whiddington
Chair of the Grants Committee of John Lyon's Charity

November 2015

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Executive Summary

London Youth supports a network of around 400 community youth organisations across London. As part of its membership support package it has developed the Quality Mark, which aims to support member clubs to improve both front line delivery and organisational effectiveness. It aims to assist organisations to provide the highest standards of service and activities that are needed by young people. It provides clubs with a 'badge' of excellence they can use to prove they are doing the most they can to transform lives. The Quality Mark has been produced in partnership with Ambition UK and is accredited by City & Guilds. John Lyon's Charity provides core funding to London Youth for pay for the management and administration of the Quality Mark, and City Bridge Trust currently provides a financial incentive for clubs to complete the Silver and Gold levels.

Shephard & Moyes Ltd was appointed in early 2015 to evaluate the Quality Mark. The aim of the evaluation was to review the framework and process, make an assessment of the value of the Quality Mark and consider how the Quality Mark could be reshaped to deliver more benefits.

This report presents the results of our research, which consisted of an e-survey with clubs, interviews with clubs, London Youth staff and wider stakeholders and visits to a small number of clubs. It incorporates a process evaluation, impact evaluation and translates the learning into a set of broad recommendations and actions for London Youth to take the Quality Mark forward.

London Youth members come in many shapes and sizes and not all members would describe themselves as a club. However, for the purposes of this report this has been used as a generic term.

About the Quality Mark

The Quality Mark was first developed in 2006/07 and piloted between 2007 and 2010. During this period London Youth started to work with City & Guilds who provide external accreditation of the award. Between 2010 and 2012 further developments to the Quality Mark were made, as London Youth started to work with Ambition to make the award available nationally. During this period London Youth were successful in being awarded funding from John Lyon's Charity to pay for core running costs of the Quality Mark. The John Lyon's Charity are also an important advocate for the Quality Mark, encouraging clubs they fund to apply and trying to encourage other funders to do the same.

In 2014 a new team started at London Youth and the Quality Mark was integrated with other training opportunities and now forms part of the Membership Development team. Since 2014 the process has been streamlined, with the development of Getting Started meetings, check-in meetings when clubs are 80% ready, and a move away from intensive one to one support for a small number of clubs, to more reactive support and a focus on encouraging a greater number of clubs to engage.

Clubs can achieve three levels within the Quality Mark; Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Bronze award focuses on the policies and procedures clubs need to have in place to ensure they are operating legally and safely. Silver focuses more on the opportunities provided to

young people, as well as the training and support provided to staff and volunteers. The Gold award is a badge of excellence which focuses on providing evidence that the club is committed to continuous improvement and involves young people at all levels. It is expected that all clubs who are members of London Youth work towards the Bronze award as a minimum. For clubs who progress to Silver and Gold there is currently a financial incentive, provided by the City Bridge Trust.

Once clubs become members and express an interest in applying for the Quality Mark they attend a Getting Started meeting, where they find out more about the Quality Mark, what is involved and receive a copy of the folder which contains all the indicators needed to achieve the award. They then collect evidence to meet the standards; this is normally provided in hard copy format, but there are options to create a virtual folder of evidence in applications like Dropbox, although the folder itself is only available in hard copy. Once clubs feel they are 80% through the process they arrange a check-in meeting with the Quality Mark team, where their evidence is reviewed and a judgement made as to how ready for assessment the club is. The assessment takes the form of a visit to the club. This is normally in office hours so clubs are often not delivering activities. The visit comprises a review of the evidence and a discussion with the Quality Mark lead from the club. As part of the Gold assessment a young person will also visit the centre, to experience the centre from a young person's perspective and to provide a mechanism for young people to engage in the process.

A decision is made at the visit as to whether the club has achieved the award, and following the assessment clubs are sent an action plan to enable them to move to the next level or address any weaknesses.

After holding the Quality Mark for three years clubs must go through a renewal process, which currently requires clubs to assemble a new folder of evidence for the whole award.

About the clubs

Based on data held on current Quality Mark holders, as at July 2015 89 clubs hold a current award; 58 clubs have achieved Bronze, 13 have achieved Silver and 18 have achieved Gold. A further 138 have received a Quality Mark folder, but it is currently unclear as to the current status of these clubs; better tracking data will help London Youth to identify clubs who have stalled or who may need more support to achieve it.

On average 20% of members in each London borough hold the Quality Mark, although there is considerable variation between boroughs, and 6 boroughs currently don't have any member clubs holding the Quality Mark. London Youth are targeting boroughs to encourage greater take-up and understanding the reasons why some boroughs are under-represented would be useful when putting in place methods to encourage greater engagement.

Our survey showed that there is a good spread of club sizes engaging in the Quality Mark; 10% employ no paid staff and 34% employ more than 10 members of staff. This indicates that the Quality Mark is accessible for all clubs, regardless of their size.

The majority of clubs have engaged more than one person in the Quality Mark process, which shows commitment at different levels of the organisation. Clubs working towards

Silver and Gold involve a greater range of people in the process and clubs moving beyond Bronze are establishing greater commitment at Board/trustee level. Learning from other Quality Mark evaluations indicates that involvement at all levels of the organisation is critical to embedding a culture of continuous improvement, as such it may be appropriate to include in the guidance who and how different members of the organisation could be involved.

The majority (71%) of clubs do not hold any other Quality Marks, indicating that the London Youth Quality Mark is encouraging organisations to consider quality standards who would not otherwise do so. Those that do hold PQASSO, Investors In People or Investors in Volunteers or other sport or activity specific standard. Clubs that hold other quality awards say that the London Youth quality mark is comparable in terms of the time and resources it takes to complete the process, 95% say London Youth is better or the same in terms of the support provided and 55% say the benefits are greater than other Quality Marks. The London Youth Quality Mark is also felt to serve a different purpose to others, recognising that it focuses on driving up standards of youth work.

Process evaluation

The most popular reasons for applying for the Quality Mark are related to extrinsic motivators; external recognition, access to funding and providing an independent 'badge' of quality. However, over half of clubs (56%) chose to apply for the Quality Mark as a means to improve what they do, and 90% of clubs surveyed agreed that the Quality Mark encouraged them to improve what they do; so although this may not be a primary motivator in most cases the Quality Mark is resulting in changes in what clubs do. Many clubs also spoke about their desire to be (or be perceived to be) more professional.

Overall clubs were very satisfied with the Quality Mark process, with all elements scoring between 8 and 8.9 out of 10 on average. Clubs were most satisfied with the helpfulness and support of London Youth staff, and the communication provided throughout the process. Although still scoring an average of 8 out of 10, clubs were least satisfied with the information provided beforehand.

"It was an interesting experience: you could almost call it fun!"

London Youth uses Net Satisfaction Scores (NSS) as a way of comparing satisfaction across all areas of their work. All of London Youth's services are rated using four standard categories; experience, engagement, support and barriers. We mapped these criteria against the survey questions to calculate Net Satisfaction Scores. The overall Net Satisfaction Score for the Quality Mark was 44.94% which is very good and one of the highest within London Youth's services (a positive score is considered to be good and 50% or above is excellent). The highest NSS related to how London Youth engages clubs (by being helpful and supportive), at 57.5%, and the lowest NSS related to removing barriers to engaging (information provided beforehand and the Getting Started meeting), which at 30% is still a good result.

From our discussions with clubs and stakeholders most felt that the indicators were appropriate; 85% agreed that the Quality Mark measures the 'right things' and 67% agreed that the standard reflected what was important to young people. Most clubs agreed that the standards were relevant and appropriate quality measures for what they do, however some

clubs and stakeholders felt that the Quality Mark could be enhanced by including indicators on measuring impact and carrying out evaluation.

“It was very appropriate for the work we do – some things look like they might not be relevant, and sometimes it’s hard to capture the evidence. But that’s the work we needed to do. It can be frustrating, but it’s worth it”

Clubs were also satisfied with the three levels, feeling that they showed appropriate progression and were pitched at the right level.

“The standards are appropriate. Having the progression is useful and it is good the silver and gold are more young people focused”

The majority of clubs (72%) agreed that the type/level of evidence needed is appropriate, although a number felt there is some duplication across the folders. Although clubs were conscious of the time needed to collect the evidence, 79% felt that the time/resources needed to achieve the award was appropriate, with most clubs accepting that although onerous, this was to be expected. However, many clubs said that it took them longer than they expected, and more information about this at the start would be useful.

Some clubs and stakeholders were also keen to see other ways of collecting evidence, with some (but not all) keen to see an on-line system to upload evidence and find resources and guidance on how to achieve the standard.

It was also felt that the standards of evidence could be widened to include observation and/or interview, rather than just focusing on paper evidence. It was felt that the current assessment visits were a missed opportunity to add value to the process; building in session observation and interviews/discussions with staff, volunteers and young people would build a better picture of how the club runs and provide additional evidence to help meet the standard.

Gold standard clubs also felt that the young assessor visit was of limited use and the general view is that other ways of involving young people (from the club as well as from London Youth’s young people’s forum) would help raise awareness of the Quality Mark amongst young people.

Most clubs were complimentary about the support provided by London Youth, however felt that more information could be provided beforehand and some want more support during the process. Although it is important that clubs own the process themselves, some clubs need more support to enable them to achieve the award, although more resources will be needed to do this. Clubs also want more resources, signposting to training, mentoring support from successful clubs and standard policy templates.

“It’s important to have support from London Youth staff – the relationship that’s developed is very productive. They are professional but supportive. But going through the whole thing is daunting – it would be good to have it reviewed...or more meetings to see the difference as we go along”

Currently 20% of clubs have been through the re-accreditation process. Many clubs we spoke to were surprised to hear that they would need to start from scratch after 3 years and

most said that they won't do this as they don't have the resources and/or wouldn't see any additional benefit from being re-accredited. It's important that clubs aren't seen to be 'dropping out' of the Quality Mark, so London Youth need to find a way of developing a re-accreditation process that adds value, whilst ensuring that the rigour of the assessment is maintained.

Impact evaluation

The survey asked clubs to rate themselves against 5 outcomes, both before engaging in the Quality Mark and now, as a result of their engagement. Overall 78% of clubs have shown a positive change against at least one of the outcomes. As a result of the Quality Mark:

- 81% of clubs now have some formal continuous improvement process in place
- The proportion of clubs who have a range of methods to promote what they do and/or are well known has increased from 54% to 73% of clubs
- As a result of the Quality Mark 84% of clubs now have a robust, regularly reviewed set of policies in place
- High level involvement of young people has shifted from something that only half of clubs did before engaging in the Quality Mark, to something that 69% of clubs do now

The Quality Mark has also helped to motivate staff/volunteers, helped generate funding and increased clubs' influence with local stakeholders. It has also helped clubs network with others.

"I think it will encourage a culture of continuous improvement, improve our ability to generate funding, help young people take more pride in their club, help us network/share good practice and improve our credibility with parents/carers"

"We secured £38k in funding and then had to submit a 9 page due diligence spreadsheet. We had the best rating amongst any groups applying and some groups had to turn down the funding as they couldn't meet the criteria. We were only in this position due to having recently completed the Bronze award"

Clubs that have celebrated and promoted the award feel that it matters to their young people, but most felt that having the Quality Mark didn't make a difference to young people or parent/carer choices about which clubs to attend. Finding ways to involve young people from the clubs in the assessment process may help to raise awareness and value of the award more.

To be truly beneficial, the Quality Mark needs to be widely understood and valued by clubs and funders alike. Although quality systems are valued by funders and commissioners, not much is known about the London Youth Quality Mark, outside the clubs and funders who currently use it. Clubs are keen for London Youth to take the lead in raising awareness of the Quality Mark. They see London Youth's role as encouraging greater take up from other clubs, promoting successful clubs and lobbying funders to make the Quality Mark a pre-requisite for funding. Clubs also recognised that they also have a responsibility to promote the Quality Mark; some currently do a lot whereas others currently do little. London Youth

could support clubs to promote the Quality Mark by providing advice and support post-award.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall the Quality Mark is a positive experience for the majority of clubs; regardless of the reason for engaging the Quality Mark is meeting clubs' needs and the vast majority have seen some improvements as a result. Overall satisfaction is high, however improvements to the information provided beforehand would help break down barriers to engagement. Clubs have seen tangible benefits in terms of improved policies and access to funding, but also intangible benefits such as increased morale, confidence and pride. Many clubs feel more professional and feel that having the Quality Mark makes stakeholders and funders perceive them differently, which is a major benefit of holding the award. However, there is a clear need to raise the profile of the Quality Mark amongst clubs and funders; achieving a critical mass of support and awareness will result in it being a recognised award.

It is clear that overall the Quality Mark is achieving its objectives and there are no major concerns with the way it works. Instead of identifying weaknesses, the evaluation has instead highlighted some areas that can move the Quality Mark from good to excellent:

- Enhancing support for clubs
- Simpler ways of collecting evidence – e.g. through an online tool to make the Quality Mark interactive as well as easier to upload evidence
- Improving management information on clubs to monitor progress
- Review the re-accreditation process to ensure it adds value and be robust without going over old ground
- Ensuring that the assessment visits add value by incorporating other standards of evidence (e.g. observation of sessions, interviews with staff, volunteers and young people)
- Ensuring that young people are involved in a more meaningful way
- Supporting clubs to promote the benefits and influencing stakeholders/funders
- Encourage clubs to measure the impact of what they do, and embed evaluation within the Quality Mark process to continue to reflect on what works well and not so well

“The whole experience has been really positive. We are much more up to date with policies etc.; it has been invaluable having the push to do that. It’s been really good being able to share with project volunteers and also colleagues in other departments what we’re doing. It has encouraged a more coherent approach to service delivery. The opportunities for staff development / funding opportunities have been thick and fast. I’m currently on the leadership and management training course delivered by London Youth, and one of our volunteers is about to go on FA training, and we’ve been recommended to Access Sport by London Youth and are now in the process of getting £4,000 to run a football project.”

Introduction

London Youth supports a network of around 400 diverse community youth organisations where young people choose to go. With reach to over 75,000 young Londoners, they deliver programmes with and through this network in every London borough and out of town at two residential learning centres.

London Youth's mission is to support and challenge young people to become the best they can be. Their vision is that all young Londoners access a wide range of high quality opportunities for learning and fun, beyond family and formal education, building strong trusted relationships with adults and their peers; leading to broadened networks and increased confidence, character and skills.

London Youth want all young Londoners to have the best of this incredible capital city; for it to invest in their potential, encourage them as leaders in their communities and open up opportunities for them to thrive.

London Youth's members are an incredibly diverse range of organisations – traditional youth clubs, community centres, arts and sports clubs, projects for refugees, disabled young people and many other groups. They support members so that whenever a young person goes through their doors they receive a high quality experience which meets their needs, allows them to learn and have fun, and helps them gain confidence, resilience and build stronger networks and relationships.

London Youth members come in many shapes and sizes, and not all members would describe themselves as 'clubs'. However, for the purposes of this report this has been used as a generic term.

In order to best support the needs of young Londoners, London Youth wants to support and sustain the development of a network of high quality youth organisations which are embedded within the range of other services accessed by young people within their communities. They do this through the recruitment and administration of members, providing training and opportunities for members to participate in thematic and learning groups, as well as through a package of accreditation and capacity building through the City & Guilds accredited London Youth Quality Mark (the Quality Mark).

The Quality Mark has been produced in partnership with Ambition UK and is supported by City & Guilds. John Lyon's Charity provides core funding to London Youth to pay for the management and administration of the Quality Mark.

The Membership Development Team at London Youth has recently been restructured and a new team employed in 2014 has been tasked with reviewing and improving how the Quality Mark works. To support this work they sought an external evaluation of the Quality Mark.

Evaluating the Quality Mark

Shephard & Moyes Ltd were commissioned in early 2015 to evaluate the Quality Mark. The aim of the evaluation was to:

- Review objectively the framework and process through which the Quality Mark is supported and delivered (Process review)
- Make an assessment of the value of the Quality Mark as a tool for improving practice (Impact review)
- Consider how the Quality Mark should be reshaped to deliver more benefits and identify how the value of it can be measured and communicated (Capturing learning)

An evaluation framework was produced following a workshop with Quality Mark stakeholders, including London Youth staff, funders and member clubs who have achieved the Quality Mark. The purpose of the workshop was to explore with stakeholders the desired outcomes for the project and consider what research questions the evaluation should focus on.

This evaluation framework details the Theory of Change for the project (see appendix 1) and uses this to develop research questions as shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Research questions

Objective	Research Questions
Review objectively the framework and process through which the Quality Mark is support and delivered (Process review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the drivers/motivation for clubs aspiring to achieve the QM? • What other quality frameworks do clubs use and how do these compare to the QM? • How satisfied are clubs with overall process (experience, engagement, enhancing support and removing barriers) or Quality Mark? • Are clubs offered the right type/amount of support from London Youth? • How valuable is the City Bridge funding as an incentive to achieve silver/gold standards? • Is the self-assessment documentation and self-evaluation process useful? • Is the re-accreditation process (after 3 years) carried out in the most efficient way? • How well understood are the indicators by clubs? • Are the indicators measuring the 'right things'? • Do clubs feel that the standards of evidence are appropriate? • Are the three levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold) appropriate and reflect progression in clubs? • Is the assessment process robust enough to ensure clubs are delivering good youth work? • Are members aware of the benefits of the QM? • Is there commitment at all levels within clubs? • Is communication appropriate/sufficient during the process? • Is the City & Guilds accreditation important to clubs? • Is the level of involvement by City & Guilds appropriate/useful?

Objective	Research Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the level of YP involvement in achieving the QM appropriate?
Make an assessment of the value of the Quality Mark as a tool for improving practice (Impact review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do clubs see the QM as a priority? Are funders/commissioners more aware of/asking for QM? Is there greater awareness of QM amongst parents/YP/wider stakeholders? Does having the QM matter to parents/YP/wider stakeholders? Are more YP attending clubs as a result? To what extent is the QM improving the experience for YP? Are YP showing more pride in their club? To what extent is the QM enabling YP to have a voice and get involved in what happens in their club? Do clubs have better relationships with funders? Are clubs more successful and/or confident about applying for funding? Do clubs have access to new or more funding streams? To what extent have clubs made changes to what they do or how they do it to achieve the QM? How is the QM used as a tool for continuous improvement? Does the QM encourage clubs to network/share good practice? Does the QM process help clubs to better demonstrate what they do and achieve? Has the QM helped raise the profile of clubs?
Consider how the Quality Mark should be reshaped to deliver more benefits and identify how the value of it can be measured and communicated (Capturing learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could the QM be improved by implementing an online process? Could the process be more efficient to enable more clubs to benefit from the QM? Are there simpler, more efficient ways of collecting and demonstrating evidence? Could the reaccreditation process be improved? What the options are for better involving YP in the QM process? Should Quality Mark be improved by including a more robust assessment of programme design and evaluation standards? Should we add to QM the Project Oracle Standards of evidence?

These research questions have guided our evaluation. The evaluation has focused on capturing feedback and views from clubs, staff and stakeholders; as such we have not carried out a detailed review of the Quality Mark tool or audit of the process. This was recently carried out by City and Guilds as part of their role as external accreditor, which found no major areas of concern regarding the tool or assessment process.

Our approach to evaluating the Quality Mark has involved:

- An e-survey sent to all clubs who have achieved or are working towards the Quality Mark. We received 41 responses from 206 clubs who received the survey, which is a good response rate of 20%. Of those who responded, 28 have achieved the Quality Mark which represents 31% of all Quality Mark holders. The remainder are working towards the standard. A copy of the e-survey is shown in Appendix 2.
- Visits to 5 clubs who have achieved the Quality Mark. The visits involved face to face interviews with workers who led on the Quality Mark process, followed up by telephone interviews with other members of staff and external funders/stakeholders
- Telephone interviews with 5 additional clubs who have achieved the Quality Mark
- Telephone interviews with 3 strategic stakeholders (John Lyon's Charity, City & Guilds and Ambition)
- Telephone or face to face interviews with 5 members of London Youth staff

The report presents the results of this research. The first chapter provides an overview of how the Quality Mark has developed and the results of some wider research into the benefits and challenges of quality standards. The next chapter then reviews the clubs who have been involved in the Quality Mark process. The report then considers the process of applying for the Quality Mark, considering what has worked well and not so well. The final chapter then considers the impact of the Quality Mark; the difference it has made to clubs.

The report concludes with some overall conclusions and recommendations. As part of developing the recommendations we held a workshop with London Youth and John Lyon's Charity staff which considered the learning from the evaluation and translated this into actions. Appendix 2 shows the outline action plan developed at this workshop.

About the Quality Mark

In this section we provide an overview of the Quality Mark and the process clubs go through to achieve it. It also looks at wider research into the benefits and challenges of Quality Marks, taken from published literature in the area.

The Quality Mark story

The Quality Mark was first developed in 2006/07 to help support member clubs to improve both front line delivery and organisational effectiveness. It aims to assist organisations to provide the highest standards of service and activities that are needed by young people. It provides clubs with a 'badge' of excellence they can use to prove they are doing the most they can to transform lives.

The original Quality Mark was piloted between 2007 and 2010 with a range of clubs and funding was acquired to help incentivise clubs to take part. During this period London Youth started to work with City & Guilds who provide external accreditation of the award. City & Guilds saw the opportunity to work with a well-established organisation supporting a number of organisations in London which had the potential to raise awareness of City & Guilds qualifications. They provided support in developing the standard, the assessment process and act as external verifiers and moderators. In return London Youth benefited from the expertise of City & Guilds in developing a robust award process as well as the credibility that comes from the City & Guilds brand.

Between 2010 and 2012 further developments to the Quality Mark were made, as London Youth started to work with Ambition to make the award available nationally. The Quality Mark is now branded as the Ambition Quality Mark nationally, with local London Youth branding in London.

During this period London Youth were successful in being awarded funding from the John Lyon's Charity, to pay for core running costs of the Quality Mark. The John Lyon's Charity felt that the Quality Mark was an important tool to help drive up quality standards in the youth sector and provide assurances of quality for clubs seeking funding.

"A youth work specific quality mark is important for the sector so it felt natural for us to support the Quality Mark. We encourage all the clubs we fund to do it and are trying to encourage other funders to do the same" (John Lyon's Charity)

In 2014 the officer who developed the Quality Mark left London Youth and a new team has started. The Quality Mark has now been integrated with other training opportunities and now forms part of the Membership Development Team. As the Quality Mark became part of core delivery, with members being encouraged to engage, London Youth felt that the focus should shift from one-to-one support for a small number of clubs, to encouraging greater take up amongst their member base.

Since 2014 the process has been streamlined, with the development of 'Getting Started' meetings as an introduction to the Quality Mark for a number of clubs, followed by check-in meetings when clubs are 80% ready. Support is much more reactive, with the team focusing efforts on encouraging clubs to engage in the Quality Mark and trying to increase the

number of clubs who hold the award. One of the aims of the evaluation was to determine firstly whether this new approach was satisfactory to clubs and secondly whether there are more or better ways of making the process more efficient to increase the number of clubs who can benefit from the Quality Mark.

Aims and objectives

The overall aims of the Quality Mark were refined as part of the Theory of Change workshop we ran with the team and stakeholders. The Quality Mark aims to be both a tool for continuous improvement and provides external validation of quality. The specific outcomes desired as a result of the Quality Mark are shown in figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Quality Mark outcomes

Short term outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth clubs and practitioners are better challenged in their professional practice
Medium term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth clubs can successfully demonstrate that they are better at reflecting on their practice and work Youth clubs can successfully demonstrate increased recognition as quality youth work providers Youth clubs can successfully demonstrate how to be better anticipate, mitigate and manage risks Youth clubs can successfully demonstrate improvements to young people's involvement and influence in running the organisation Youth clubs can better demonstrate that young people have access to a range of opportunities and services Youth clubs and practitioners have increased confidence in the work they deliver Youth clubs are better positioned or have increased access to funding Youth workers are more satisfied with quality opportunities for London Youth
Long term outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More young Londoners achieve positive outcomes when attending high quality youth clubs

The award

Clubs can achieve 3 levels within the Quality Mark; Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Bronze award focuses on the policies and procedures clubs need to have in place to ensure they are operating legally and safely. Silver focuses more on the opportunities provided to young people, as well as the training and support provided to staff and volunteers. The Gold award is a badge of excellence which focuses on providing evidence that the club is committed to continuous improvement and involves young people at all levels. It is expected that all clubs who are members of London Youth work towards the Bronze level as a minimum.

For clubs who progress to Silver and Gold there is currently a financial incentive, provided by the City Bridge Trust. Clubs who receive the Silver award receive £5,000 or for Gold they receive £7,000. A club renewing Silver or Gold will receive £3,000.

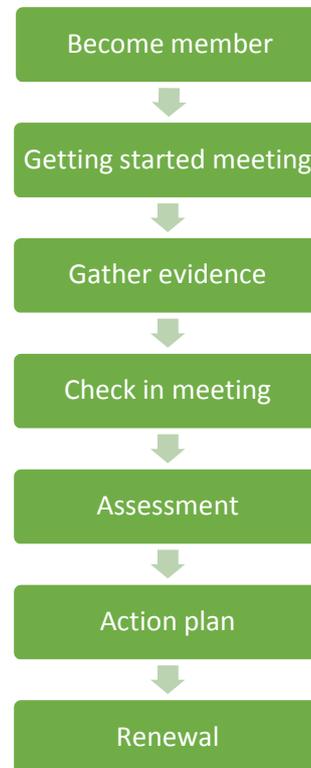
The process

The diagram to the right details the process clubs go through to apply for the Quality Mark. Once they are a member they can attend a Getting Started meeting. These take place at regular times during the year and clubs who are interested in starting the Quality Mark can attend. At the Getting Started meeting they find out more about the Quality Mark, what is involved and receive a copy of the folder which contains all the indicators needed to achieve the award.

Once they have attended the Getting Started meeting they are then tasked with gathering evidence to meet the Quality Mark standards. The folder gives guidance on the number of pieces of evidence that are needed for each indicator, suggestions for the type of evidence they could use and guidelines on how to achieve the indicator. At Bronze level the majority of the evidence needed is written, at Silver and Gold levels more creative methods of producing evidence are also accepted, including videos, photos, podcasts etc., although most evidence is written. Currently the majority of clubs provide evidence in hard copy format but there is an option to create a virtual folder of evidence using applications such as Dropbox. However, the folders are only currently available in hard copy.

Once clubs feel they are 80% through the process they arrange a check-in meeting with the Quality Mark team. At this meeting the evidence is reviewed and a judgement made as to how ready for assessment the club is. If they are making good progress a date for the assessment visit can be made. If not they are offered advice and guidance on how to meet any gaps in their evidence.

Once the club is ready an assessment visit takes place. This is a half day visit by a member of the London Youth Quality Mark team, and a co-assessor from either City & Guilds or one other person from London Youth. At the visit they review all the evidence and make a decision as to whether or not to award the Quality Mark. Generally, the visits happen during the working day which often means that the club isn't delivering activities, and the visit mainly comprises a review of the evidence and a discussion with the Quality Mark lead from the club. Currently no interviews take place with young people or the wider staff/volunteer team and no sessions are formally observed as part of the assessment. As part of the Gold assessment a young person will also visit the centre; the aim of this visit is to experience the centre from a young person's perspective and it also provides a mechanism to involve young people in the Quality Mark assessment process.



Following the assessment the club is sent an action plan, containing any actions they may need to take to move to the next level, or anything that didn't quite meet the standard.

After holding the Quality Mark for 3 years clubs must go through a renewal process; this currently consists of clubs having to start from scratch and assemble a new folder of evidence. The appropriateness of this approach has been explored as part of the evaluation as well as capturing views on the overall process.

Wider research

As part of our research we carried out a short literature review on other Quality Marks, in particular focusing on other external evaluations that have been carried out. The results of the literature review have informed the evaluation framework as well as providing some context for this work.

Figure 3 below summarises the benefits and challenges of Quality Marks in general. It shows that there are a number of common benefits in terms of both external and internal motivators, plus a number of common challenges or limitations.

Figure 3: Benefits and challenges of Quality Marks

Benefits	Challenges/Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external drivers • Recognition and credibility • Benchmarks organisations • Secure funding • Motivation for staff • Organisational learning • Promotes continuous improvement • Framework for consistency • Dedicated resource for continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive/resource intensive • If lacks rigour, can undermine value • Can be limited or measure the wrong thing • In pursuit of a 'badge' organisations can lose sight of purpose – improvement • Requires commitment at all levels • Re-accreditation to retain award is necessary but can be onerous

Learning from other Quality Mark evaluations has also identified a number of key factors for a successful Quality Mark:

- Involvement of people at all levels of the organisation is essential (PQASSO)¹
- Understanding the main reason for investing in quality activities is not to achieve external recognition but to improve the organisation (PQASSO)¹
- The more changes that are made as a result of going through the process, the more satisfied organisations are (IIP)²

¹ <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/about-performance-improvement/what-is-quality/quality-systems-frameworks/quality-awards>

² UKCES, Research to support the evaluation of Investors in People: Employer survey, July 2012

- Support from advisers/website was valued (IIP)²
- Clarity of process and substantial support led to high levels of satisfaction (IIV)³
- The award needs to have a high profile – to be understood by many (IIV)³
- Members want more post award support and peer support (IIV)³
- Awareness of the QM was not a key factor influencing young people's decisions (Buttle)⁴
- Organisations often hold more than one award – some duplication found (Big Lottery research with VCOs)⁵
- Organisations like simple, tailored and flexible standards (Big)⁵
- Ticks a box for commissioners – but working through the standard has (often) unintended benefit of improving services (Big)⁵
- If done well, taken seriously and measure the right things then viewed positively by VCOs (Big)⁵

³ IfVR, NCVO, Investing in Volunteers Impact Assessment 2013 – Summary report

⁴ Buttle UK, Assessing the Impact of the Buttle UK Quality Mark in Higher Education, 2013

⁵ Big Lottery Fund, NCVO, OPM; Scoping Study, Quality Assurance in the Voluntary and Community Sector, 2012

About the clubs

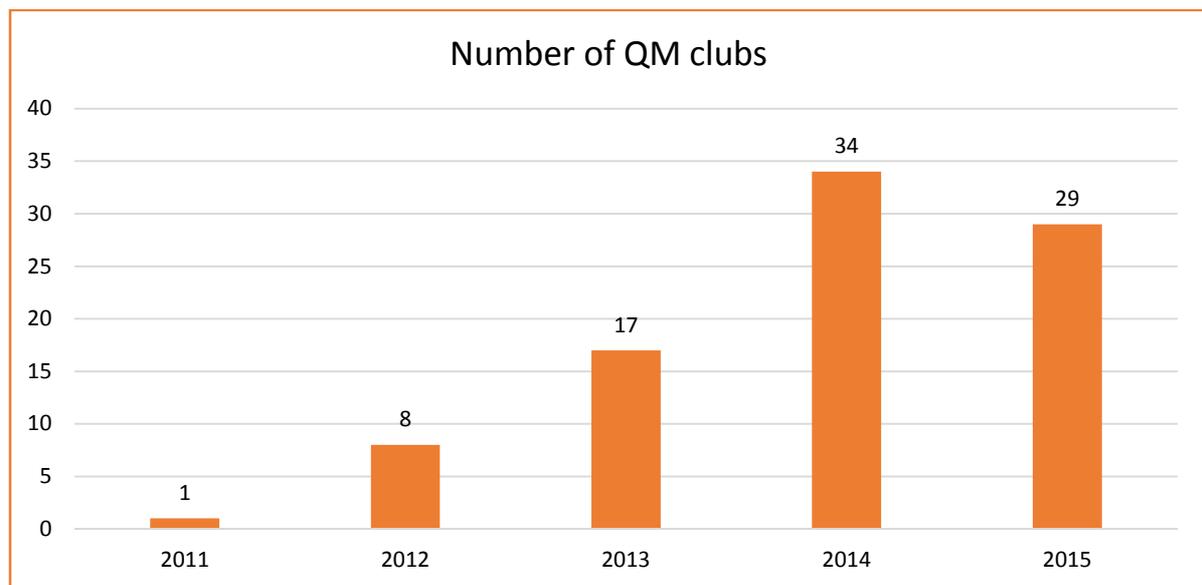
In this section we set out what the Quality Mark has achieved to date using data held on current holders.

As at July 2015, 227 clubs were engaged in some way in the Quality Mark process, with 89 holding a current award. Of these:

- 58 clubs have achieved Bronze
- 13 clubs have achieved Silver
- 18 clubs have achieved Gold

Figure 4 below shows when the current holders of the Quality Mark were assessed; some are new Bronze awards, others are renewals or clubs moving from Bronze to Silver or Silver to Gold. It shows a steady increase of Quality Mark assessments since 2011, with 71% achieving an award since January 2014. Since the new team started in June 2014 51 clubs have been assessed which represents 57% of the total in just 12 months. Although it's likely that a significant number of these would have been working towards the award before June 2014 it may indicate that the changes to the process have helped increase the number of clubs being assessed for the Quality Mark.

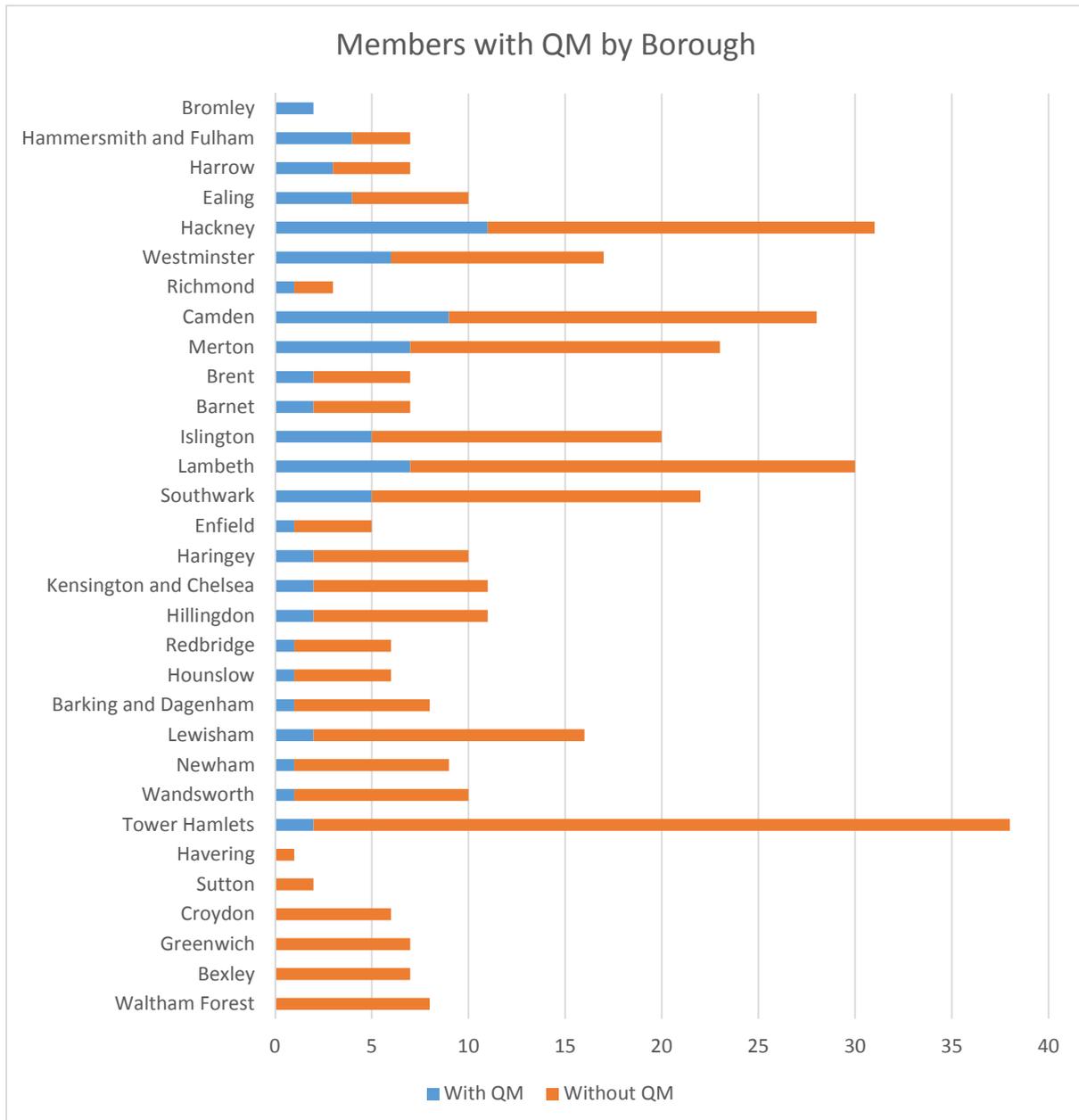
Figure 4: Quality Mark assessments since 2011



The Quality Mark team recognise that the data currently held on clubs working through the Quality Mark process is somewhat limited. There are currently 138 clubs on the Quality Mark system that are either logged as working towards Bronze or their status is blank and for many the actual status is unknown; it is not clear whether they are actively working towards the Quality Mark or whether they have just received the folder at some point and are no longer pursuing it. It would be useful build in the current IT system ways to record and analyse tracking information about clubs; so reports can be produced which show the current status of each club and the length of time each club has taken to achieve each award level. This information would help identify clubs who have stalled or who may need more support to achieve it.

Figure 5 below shows how many member clubs in each Borough have and haven't achieved the Quality Mark. It shows that on average around 20% of members in each borough hold the Quality Mark, with some boroughs such as Bromley, Hammersmith, Harrow, and Ealing having 40% of more members achieved the award. However, 6 boroughs don't have any member clubs holding the Quality Mark; and while Tower Hamlets has the most members, only 5% (2 members) hold the award. London Youth are targeting some boroughs to encourage greater take up; understanding why some boroughs are under-represented would be useful when putting in place methods to encourage greater engagement.

Figure 5: Member clubs in each borough with and without the Quality Mark

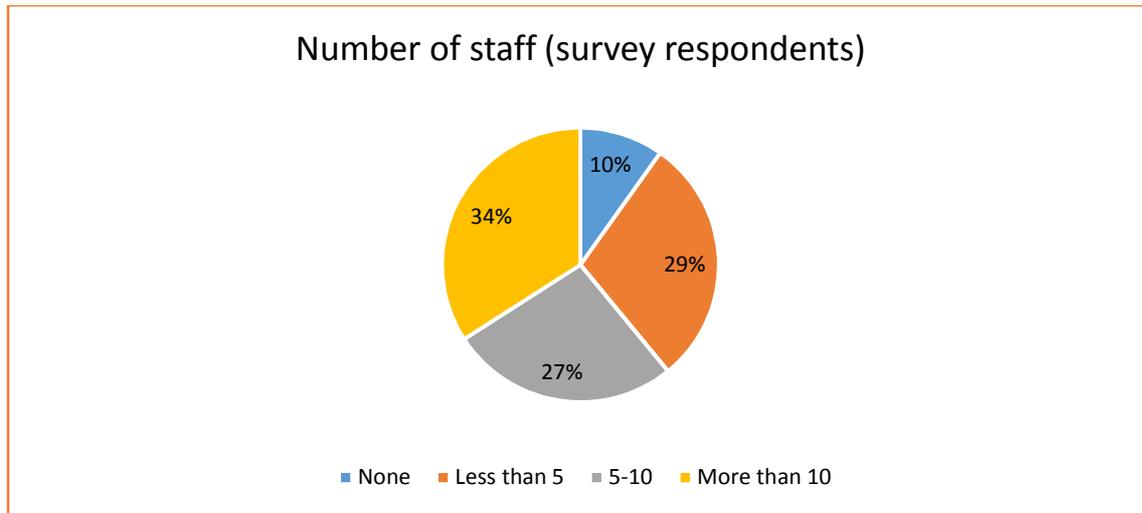


Club size and commitment

Figure 6 below shows the size of the clubs involved in the Quality Mark (who responded to our survey), based on the number of staff they employ. The majority of clubs employ at least 5 members of staff and over a third employ more than 10. However, 10% of clubs who completed the survey employ no paid staff so are entirely reliant on volunteers. This shows there is a good spread of clubs who are engaging in the Quality Mark process and that it is accessible for all clubs, regardless of their size.

“It’s appropriate for all size clubs, from the smallest to the largest” (Club)

Figure 6: Club size

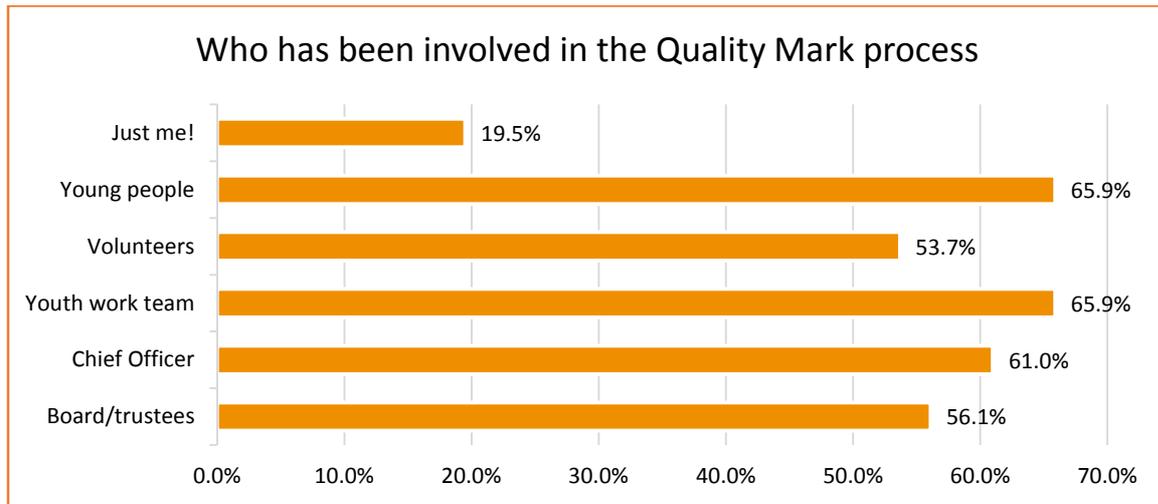


The majority of clubs have engaged more than one person in the Quality Mark process; an encouraging finding as it shows a commitment at all levels. Only 20% of clubs just had one person involved in the process and a large proportion involved young people and staff. Although more than half involved their Board, for a true commitment to continuous improvement you would expect to see a greater involvement at a strategic level. From speaking to clubs it appeared that smaller clubs had greater involvement from Trustees, whereas larger clubs just kept them informed.

“Our trustees wanted us to obtain a quality standard as they wanted the reassurance that we were delivering high quality work” (Club)

“We report to our Board when we achieved the Quality Mark, but they don’t really understand the work that has gone into achieving it” (Club)

Figure 7: Involvement in the Quality Mark



This data has been analysed in more detail to see how clubs at different stages of the Quality Mark involve people, as shown in figure 8 below. It shows that more clubs working towards the Silver and Gold levels involve a greater range of people in the process, and involvement at Board level increases to 62%. This is a positive finding as it shows that clubs moving beyond Bronze are establishing greater commitment at all levels of the organisation.

“At Bronze level there is not much practical involvement of young people. There should be more involvement “(Club)

Figure 8: Involvement in Quality Mark broken down by level

	Bronze	Silver/Gold
Just me	21%	15%
Young people	50%	100%
Volunteers	54%	54%
Youth work team	50%	100%
Chief Officer	50%	85%
Board/trustees	54%	62%

Learning from other Quality Mark evaluations indicates that involvement at all levels of the organisation is critical to embedding a culture continuous improvement within an organisation. As such it may be appropriate to include in the Quality Mark guidance of who and how different members of the organisation could be involved.

Other Quality Marks

71% of clubs do not hold any other Quality Marks, indicating that the London Youth Quality Mark is perhaps encouraging organisations to consider quality standards who would not

otherwise do so. Those that do hold PQASSO (21%), Investors in People (11%) or Investors in Volunteers (4%). No clubs hold ISO or EFQM quality standards. Others include FA Charter Standard, Clubmark or sports specific charter marks.

“Some clubs are too small to engage with other quality marks such as PQASSO or IIP (some have no paid staff)” (Stakeholder)

When comparing the London Youth Quality Mark to the other quality standards they use, clubs say that they are comparable in terms of the time/resources it takes to complete the process. 50% of clubs say that the London Youth QM is better than others in terms of the support provided (45% say it's the same) and 55% say the benefits are greater than other quality marks. Only 2 clubs felt that the London Youth Quality Mark compared unfavourably to others.

“We wanted a quality mark different to IIP and PQASSO – more focused on youth work. IIP focuses on people, PQASSO focuses on systems. Both are good. But now it's appropriate to focus on youth work” (Club)

It also appears that the London Youth Quality Mark serves a different purpose to others clubs hold, with no-one we spoke to feeling that there was too much overlap or duplication between the different standards.

“IIP helped us to improve our communication and vision sharing; PQASSO improved our systems; London Youth is improving the quality of youth work”

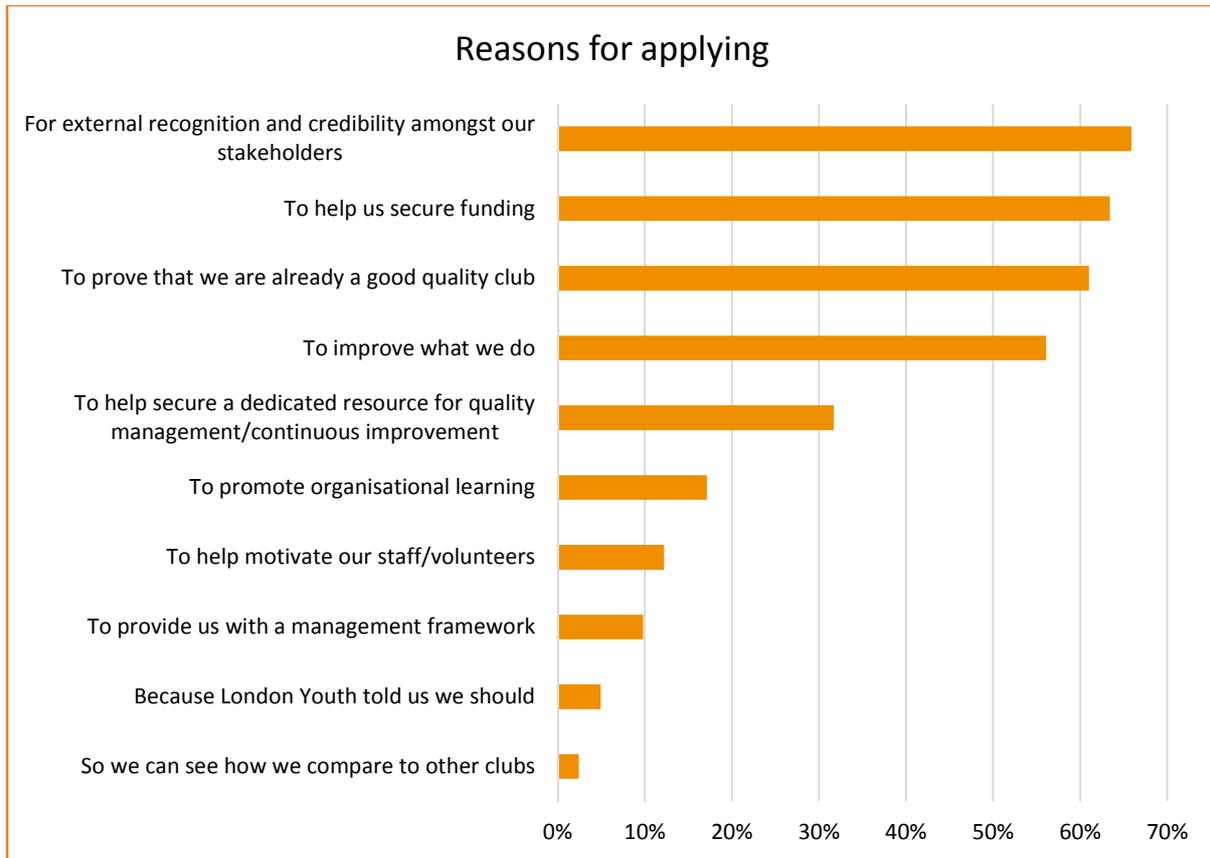
Process evaluation

This chapter considers the strengths and weaknesses of the process clubs go through to obtain the Quality Mark. It considers the motivators for clubs engaging in the process, feedback on the appropriateness of the indicators, the assessment process and re-assessment process. It also considers the support provided by London Youth staff.

Reasons for applying

The chart below shows the reasons why clubs apply for the Quality Mark.

Figure 9: Reasons for applying



It shows that the most popular reasons are mainly extrinsic motivators of external recognition, access to funding and providing an independent ‘badge’ of quality.

“Recognition is important to both the community and providers” (Club)

“We knew we were good quality and the Quality Mark has just helped us to prove this” (Club)

When speaking to clubs a big motivator was the City Bridge funding as an incentive.

“The City Bridge funding was a big motivator and I’m not sure we would have done it without this” (Club)

However, over half of clubs (56%) chose to apply for the Quality Mark as a means to improve what they do.

“We are committed to continuous improvement – it’s not worth it just to get rubber stamped for funders”

A number of clubs also spoke about the desire to behave (or be seen) as being more professional. This view was also echoed by some stakeholders.

“We wanted to be more professional, have more credibility” (Club)

“So many [clubs] aren’t – we wanted to set ourselves apart as delivering a professional service” (Club)

“There is a perception amongst some that the youth sector is a bit ‘soft’. We are working hard [through the Quality Mark] to show that the sector does have ambition (London Youth)

Only a very small proportion of clubs (5%) did it because London Youth had told them they should. The Quality Mark is optional (although holding it is a pre-requisite to accessing some benefits), and while some clubs perceive it to be compulsory it is encouraging that this is only a very small percentage. The Quality Mark is also not really being used as a benchmarking tool, enabling clubs to compare themselves to others.

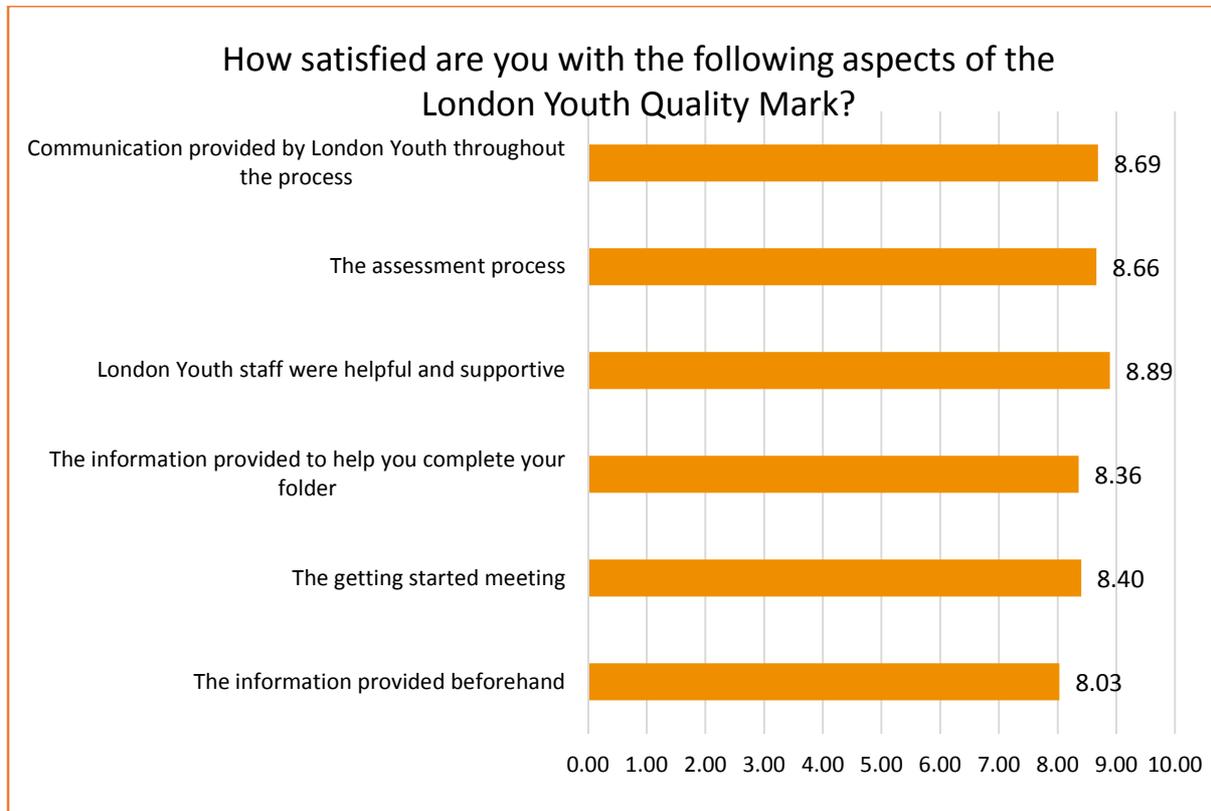
Although most clubs chose to apply for the Quality Mark for external reasons, 90% of survey recipients agreed that the Quality Mark encouraged them to improve what they do; so although this may not be a primary motivator, in most cases the Quality Mark is resulting in changes and improvements to what clubs do.

“Lots of clubs start off using it to prove they are good, then find out it actually helps them improve. It’s a good experience and they generally learn a lot from the process. Some think it will be straightforward – but getting Silver and Gold makes them a better club” (Stakeholder)

Overall satisfaction with the process

Clubs were asked to rate various elements of the process against a scale of 1-10. On average, clubs scored each element between 8 and 8.9 out of 10, showing very high levels of satisfaction overall.

Figure 10: Overall satisfaction



“It was an interesting experience – you could almost call it fun!” (Club)

Only 3 elements were rated less than 5 out of 10; the information provided beforehand (2 clubs rated less than 5), the getting started meeting (1 club) and the information provided to complete the folder (1 club). Clubs were most satisfied with the helpfulness and support of London Youth staff (8.89 out of 10), and the communication provided throughout the process (8.69 out of 10).

“London Youth are very helpful and supportive” (Club)

“The woman who did the assessment was fantastic!” (Club)

Although still scoring an average of 8 out of 10, clubs were least satisfied with the information provided beforehand.

“The initial information was general and not that clear. It didn't provide us with any idea of the range of information required only that it would take a long time. Also the electronic version was not well set out and had London Youth's notes to themselves still attached and the format it was in was not easy to follow” (Club)

Net Satisfaction Scores

London Youth use Net Satisfaction Scores (NSS) as a way of comparing satisfaction across all areas of their work. This is a more sophisticated method of calculating satisfaction as it concentrates on promoters (those who score 9 or 10) and detractors (those who score 6 or below) only. A positive NSS is considered to be a good result, with anything over 50% being regarded as excellent. All of London Youth’s services are rated using 4 standard categories; experience, engagement, support and barriers. We mapped these criteria against the survey questions to calculate the Net Satisfaction Score for all clubs who completed the survey. The table below shows the results of this analysis.

Figure 11: Net Satisfaction Scores

Category	Survey question/s	All clubs
Experience	Assessment process	47.37%
Engagement	Helpfulness/ supportiveness of London Youth staff	57.5%
Support	Information provided to help complete folder Communication from LY throughout process	44.87%
Barriers	Information provided beforehand Getting started meeting	30%
Overall		44.94%

Overall the NSS ratings are high, with an overall NSS of 44.94% which is one of highest within London Youth’s service. The highest NSS related to the helpfulness and support provided by London Youth staff and the lowest NSS related to removing barriers to engaging; the information provided beforehand and the Getting Started meeting. Although still overall a good rating, improving the information provided would help increase clubs satisfaction and remove barriers to engaging, thereby hopefully increasing the number of clubs who apply.

Indicators

From our discussions with clubs and stakeholders most felt that the indicators were appropriate for youth clubs in general. 85% of survey respondents agreed that the Quality Mark measured the ‘right things’ and 67% agreed that the standard reflected what was important to young people. Other than a few indicators that some clubs felt weren’t appropriate (e.g. premises for clubs that do not have any) most agreed that they were relevant and appropriate quality measures for what they do.

“We are confident it is measuring the right things. Some tweaks are still needed; additional guidance, evidence and standards need tightening up in some places and additional

indicators are being developed for Silver and Gold. But we review it continually and it's an ongoing process" (Ambition)

Some clubs mentioned that the Quality Mark could also include consideration of how to capture impact and carry out evaluation. It currently includes the need to monitor feedback and participation of young people, but does not have an emphasis on evaluation. Some clubs mentioned that they do this as part of externally funded projects and could be included. This view is also echoed by London Youth staff, who have recently started to promote the use of Theory of Change and outcomes/impact based evaluation amongst its membership and feel that this is a gap in the Quality Mark. However, one stakeholder pointed out that often clubs who are able to undertake evaluation are those with funding for projects (and therefore have resources to do this) – it becomes more difficult to do this for core provision.

Developing systems and approaches to measuring the impact of what clubs do is really important in today's climate of competing for funding. However, it's also important that the Quality Mark considers what level of evaluation is appropriate for each club, based on their resources and activity. It should not prescribe a particular method, but instead encourage clubs to establish systems that are appropriate for them, whilst ensuring that the impact of what they do is captured.

Clubs were also satisfied with the three levels and felt that they showed appropriate progression and were pitched at the right level. 79% agreed that the three levels are pitched at the right level.

"The standards are appropriate. Having the progression is useful and it is good the silver and gold are more young people focused" (Club)

Capturing evidence

Clubs don't have a problem with the need to provide robust evidence against the indicators, with 72% agreeing that the type/level of evidence needed is appropriate.

"It was very appropriate for the work we do – some things look like they might not be relevant, and sometimes it's hard to capture the evidence. But that's the work we needed to do. It can be a bit frustrating, but it's worth it" (Club)

Most felt that there was some duplication across the folders (e.g. the same policy/piece of evidence being used over multiple indicators). It was felt that it should be ok to reference the same policy/piece of evidence for multiple indicators, rather than duplicating.

"There was a lot of overlap in the file and repetition of evidence" (Club)

In many cases the repetition is perceived, rather than actual, as although the same piece of evidence can be used against a number of indicators, the assessor team are actually looking for different things each time. Making this clear to clubs may help alleviate some of the frustration related to perceived duplication.

Although all clubs were conscious of the time needed to collect the evidence needed, none felt that this was inappropriate or disproportionate. Most accepted that this was what was

necessary to achieve the award and 79% felt that the time/resources needed to achieve the Quality Mark was appropriate.

“The amount of time it takes is an issue. But generally that’s to be expected” (Club)

However a lot of clubs we spoke to said it took them longer than they expected and more information about this at the start would be useful.

“People should be made aware that it’s quite onerous” (Stakeholder)

“We only really started to realise the implications of what it involved once we started compiling the evidence for Bronze” (Club)

Most clubs we spoke to had dedicated resources to completing the Quality Mark folders, with many saying that without this resource it would have been extremely difficult to complete.

“You need someone dedicated to this as it’s difficult for staff to incorporate this into their day to day activity” (Club)

“It’s really difficult to pick it up and do in stages; you need to spend a good couple of months dedicated to completing it” (Club)

Some clubs suggested smarter ways of capturing evidence, with on-line portals being popular in some cases (although not all – concerns were raised about security of online systems and some clubs would prefer to stick with paper-based approach).

“I’d be really interested in an on-line system. This would mean you can upload evidence as you go along and keep it live, rather than doing it all in one go” (Club)

“I’d be concerned about the security of an on-line system. I can see it may be good for some clubs but I think I’d prefer to keep to paper evidence. Making it optional would be good though” (Club)

Discussions with the staff team and wider stakeholders also felt that an on-line system would help streamline the process; enabling clubs to upload evidence on-line would be quicker for them and making the folder electronic could make it more interactive, incorporating signposting and additional guidance as well as cross referencing of some indicators to help alleviate concerns about duplication.

A number of clubs and stakeholders felt that the standards of evidence could be widened to include observation and/or interview, rather than just focusing on paper evidence. There is a feeling amongst some people we interviewed that it’s often easy to provide paper evidence, but actually observing how the club runs and speaking to staff, volunteers and young people will show reality.

“Young people should be spoken to as part of the process – you will get more out of it than from bits of paper” (Club)

Assessment visit

With one exception, all clubs we spoke to were satisfied with the assessment visit and were generally pleased to be able to ‘show off’ what they do to London Youth staff.

“The accreditation meeting was useful – I liked the report with actions” (Club)

“The assessment visit was a great experience – it’s more than just paperwork as they can see how we work and speak to young people” (Club)

However, assessment visits were less effective when they were carried out during times when no youth work was being delivered. And some clubs wanted a bit more information about what to expect from the visit so they could prepare more thoroughly.

“We weren’t told how it would work beforehand – we weren’t given anything to help us prepare. The visit lasted 2-3 hours – they went through the portfolio without us there and then gave feedback at the end. Didn’t ask for any clarification during the assessment or speak to staff or young people which was strange. We were challenged about the lack of young people at the club but they didn’t ask specific for that and they scheduled the assessment visit for during school time so there are no activities running then. It seemed like a bit of a missed opportunity to really see how we work. To get the most out of the visit it needs to be planned better” (Club)

Wider stakeholders also view the assessment visits as one of the USPs of the Quality Mark, as some standards do not include this as part of the assessment.

“It’s hugely important to do the visit – we wouldn’t give clubs grants without seeing their work, so the same should apply for the Quality Mark” (stakeholder)

However, the assessment visit is a resource intensive element of the process and if it is just used as a way to review the paperwork/evidence then there are missed opportunities to add value to the process (as this could be done remotely). Building in observation of session and interviews/discussions with staff, young people and volunteers would build a better picture of how the club runs and provide additional evidence to meet the standard.

“Next time, we would appreciate if the assessment team could visit us during activity sessions to experience first-hand the service we provide to young people” (Club)

“It would have been better to have a presentation [from us] rather than them going through it all by themselves” (Club)

A small number of Gold standard clubs also felt that the young assessor visit was of limited use – one club felt that it was inappropriate for a young person from outside the area to attend and have a view on what was happening in that club, and another felt that the young person was ill-prepared and not really confident enough to engage in the session.

“I didn’t really see the point of the young person attending the session. To be honest it felt a bit tokenistic” (Club)

Support from London Youth

Most clubs were complimentary about the support provided from London Youth, however most felt that more information could be provided beforehand and some wanted more support during the process.

“We’ve met some lovely people and they are all very supportive” (Club)

“The advice and support from London Youth was invaluable – it’s effectively free advice and support to make a club more professional. If something wasn’t adequate they pointed us in the right direction” (Club)

“It’s important to have support from London Youth staff – the relationship that’s developed is very productive. They are professional but supportive. But going through the whole thing is daunting – it would be good to have it reviewed by someone or more meetings to see the difference/changes being made as we go along” (Club)

“We didn’t really have any support from London Youth” (Club)

From discussions with the staff team it is felt that it’s important that clubs own the process and self-manage themselves as much as possible. However, there is a recognition that although for the majority of clubs this process works, some need more support.

“It’s important that we help smaller clubs who need to improve and need more support. But we need more resources to do this” (London Youth)

Additional support suggested by clubs and stakeholders included:

- Summary of common challenges/pitfalls
- Signposting to other resources when they start, as well as at the check-in meeting
- Linking London Youth training to the Quality Mark indicators
- Connecting clubs who are having similar issues or who have gone through the same process to provide peer to peer support
- Standard policy templates (or links to existing resources)
- More assistance on helping clubs to update our policies on a regular basis such that they reflect any important legislative changes.
- Provide more support to smaller groups who may need more hands on support
- Have allocated support workers who work with clubs through the process

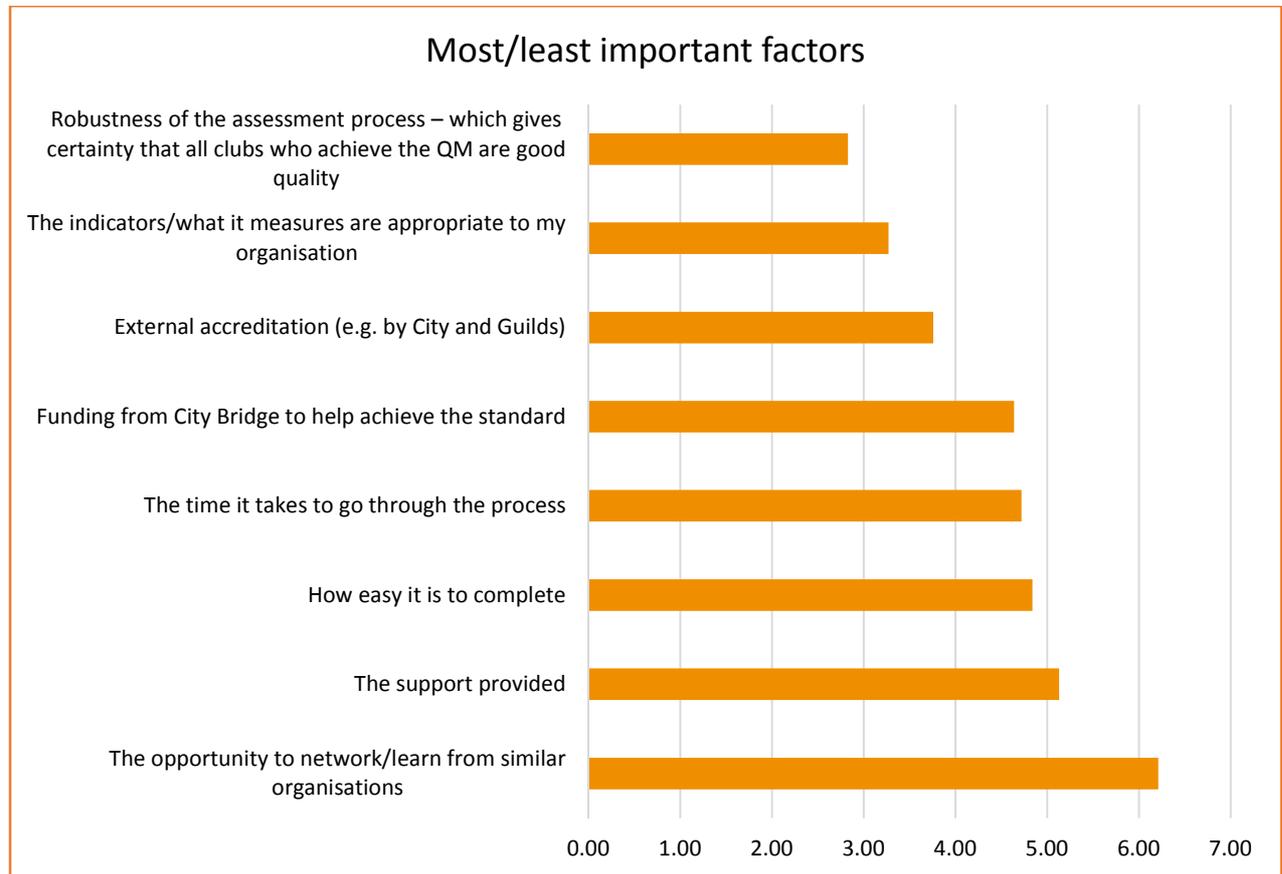
Suggestions to improve the process included:

- More observation of sessions rather than just reliance on paper evidence
- Extra funding to provide resources to complete the Quality Mark
- A mentoring service between successful clubs and those applying
- Electronic uploads
- Less repetition of evidence
- Regular communication to motivate clubs to continue
- Some irrelevant questions (e.g. premises, employees) that may not relate to clubs still require an answer.
- Opportunities to speak to clubs who have achieved Gold to discuss how they have done it
- Use Gold members to help support and assess clubs

Most and least important factors of a Quality Mark

Figure 12 below shows what clubs value most in a Quality Mark. They were asked to rank the statements from 1-8, where 1 was most important and 8 least important. The chart shows the average rankings, with the smallest number depicting the most important element.

Figure 12: What clubs value in a Quality Mark



It shows that the most important factors (ranked 1-3) were:

- Robustness of the assessment process (60% of clubs)
- Appropriate indicators (58% of clubs)
- External accreditation (45% of clubs)

The least important factors (ranked 6-8) were:

- Opportunity to network or learn from each other (68%)
- The support provided (45%)
- The time it takes to go through the process (43%)

This is interesting as it further shows that clubs value the robustness of the process, the fact the Quality Mark is specific to the youth sector and the external accreditation offered by City & Guilds. And despite clubs wanting more support from London Youth and wanting more opportunities to network from each other, these are not the most important factors to them.

Re-accreditation

20% of clubs have been through the re-accreditation process. A further 60% would consider re-accreditation when it was time, with only 15% of clubs unsure of whether they will apply for re-accreditation.

Most clubs we spoke to were very surprised to hear that they would need to start from scratch after three years and many were not prepared to do so. Some clubs have said that they won't do this if London Youth insist on it, and would allow the award to lapse.

"We can't start from scratch after 3 years – you only get £3k and it costs more than that to do it!"

They see the benefits they have gained so far as being sufficient, without having to repeat the process.

"We wouldn't want to start again. We haven't renewed the other Quality Marks we had – as we just prefer to use what we've learnt - having the badge isn't as important as what's changed as a result"

Most felt that a light touch review, combining updates in policies and procedures with an interview/visit would be sufficient.

"We are happy to have a review visit but we are not going to prepare 3 new folders – when most of it hasn't changed"

Suggestions for improving the re-accreditation process included:

- *For re accreditation I think it will be better if you focus on the level for which you are re-accredited instead of having to go through the whole levels again.*
- *A health check type visit / assessment from London Youth*
- *More guidance*

Discussions with London Youth staff and wider stakeholders also felt that starting from scratch after 3 years was too onerous and for many wouldn't add value, however there needs to be some system in place to ensure that clubs have maintained the level of quality, and preferably are still working to improve what they do. It is also important that clubs aren't seen as 'dropping out' of the Quality Mark process as this could have negative perceptions externally about the value of the award. There also needs to be a system in place to ensure that for clubs that have gone significant changes since the original Quality Mark was awarded are rigorously re-assessed.

Other Quality Marks also require re-accreditation but work in different ways. Both PQASSO and IIP last for 3 years; PQASSO requires a full resubmission of all evidence to renew the award whereas IIP carries out a review visit and generates an action plan as a result.

The re-accreditation process needs to be re-designed to ensure that clubs do not drop out and the process adds value, whilst ensuring that the rigour of the assessment is maintained.

Impact evaluation

This section of the report focuses on what benefits clubs and wider stakeholders have seen as a result of the Quality Mark.

Outcomes achieved

The survey asked clubs to rate themselves against five key outcomes; both before engaging in the Quality Mark process and afterwards, as a result. This has helped us to determine the distance travelled of clubs, who are often starting at different stages, as well as to show the overall change.

Figure 13 below shows the average 'before' and 'after' scores, and the overall average change. It shows that there has been a positive change overall against all five outcomes, with the greater change relating to managing risk; unsurprising given the large number of clubs who have achieved Bronze only.

Figure 13: Average outcome scores

	Before	After	Change
Reflective practice	2.72	3.19	0.47
Recognition	2.73	3.10	0.37
Managing risk	2.70	3.32	0.62
Involving young people	2.63	3.04	0.41
Youth offer	3.06	3.37	0.31

Overall 78% of clubs have shown a positive change against one of the outcomes, as shown in figure 14 below. Most clubs (22%) improved against three of the five outcomes. This is a very good outcome considering over a third of survey recipients are still working towards the Bronze award.

Figure 14: Outcomes achieved

Outcomes improved	% clubs
No change	22%
1 outcome improved	19%
2 outcomes improved	16%
3 outcomes improved	22%
4 outcomes improved	16%
5 outcomes improved	6%

Reflective practice

The first outcome related to clubs' reflective practice, and the extent to which the Quality Mark helped them to embed a culture of continuous improvement. Figure 15 below shows

that before engaging in the Quality Mark there was a relatively even split between clubs who had none or only ad hoc mechanisms to review and change what they did, to clubs who had some formal systems and process in place. As a result of the Quality Mark 81% of clubs now have some formal system in place, and only 3% have nothing.

Figure 15: Reflective Practice

	We don't have any formal mechanisms or processes for reflecting on what we do and making changes	We respond to feedback from staff/volunteers and young people and use this feedback to make changes to what we do – but on an ad hoc basis	We actively seek feedback from staff/volunteers and young people and have a process for making changes based on this feedback	We have a culture of continuous improvement where we regularly reflect on what we do and seek to make improvements – this is embedded at all level of the organisation
Before we started using the Quality Mark	11%	36%	22%	31%
Where we are now, as a result of using the Quality Mark	3%	16%	39%	42%

57% of clubs have seen an improvement against this outcome. The Quality Mark has helped them to:

- *Helped us to reflect on our policies, procedures and practices.*
- *Going through the Quality Mark process has given me the opportunity to reflect on all levels of our organisation*
- *Focused us on the purposes of evaluation*
- *Raised our awareness of areas we are weak and also the involvement of young people at all levels*
- *It has helped us to focus on the elements that required attention in order for us as an organisation to be effective and relevant.*
- *It has helped us to evaluate our work on a far higher level, seek to understand the background of each issue which arises.*
- *Helped us further understand the importance of making changes from feedback received.*
- *Refining best practices, and reminding us to review and re-invigorate older processes.*

- *Through the quality mark process we now have a clearer idea of what how we obtain feedback and have become more creative and consistent in collecting information. Each time we carry out an activity with young people we ensure that their feedback has been implemented into the programme*
- *It has made us think about the type of evidence we gather and what we take for granted as far as premises is concerned.*

Recognition

The second outcome considered how the Quality Mark has helped clubs to increase their profile and external recognition. It shows that as a result of the Quality Mark the proportion of clubs who have a range of methods to promote what they do and/or are well known has increased from around half (54%) to nearly three quarters of clubs (73%)

Figure 16: Recognition

	People aren't really aware of what we do	We have limited methods of promoting what we do	We have a range of method to promote what we do to a range of stakeholders	We are well known as a provider of good quality youth work
Before we started using the Quality Mark	11%	35%	24%	30%
As a result of using the Quality Mark	3%	23%	33%	40%

40% of clubs have improved against this outcome. The Quality Mark has helped them to:

- *Connect with a wider range of organisations*
- *I am hoping that the Quality Mark will increase our profile in this area*
- *We have been given opportunities to share our work with wider higher profile networks. The quality assurance has assisted us in securing funding.*
- *Gave us recognition and provides proof that we have good quality youth services.*
- *We will use this on our funding materials and marketing which will increase our standing amongst stakeholders*
- *We are good at informing schools and young people about what we do. The quality mark has enabled us to communicate better with funders and local authority members regarding the standard of our work.*
- *Has opened new doors for us in terms of funding, information , network, exposure Helped us to promote the project and the organisation*
- *It has raised our profile with funders and the council.*

Managing risk

Much of the Bronze award helps clubs to put in place appropriate policies and procedures to improve the way they manage risk. The table below shows a significant shift from clubs who only had the basic policies in place (or who didn't) to those who have a robust set of policies in place. Before engaging in the Quality Mark 54% of clubs had a robust, regularly reviewed set of policies in place, whereas as a result of the Quality Mark 84% have them in place.

Figure 17: Managing Risk

Answer Options	We don't have all the necessary policies in place to manage risks such as health and safety, safeguarding, data protection etc.	We have all the basic policies in place to manage risk	We have a robust set of policies in place to manage risk and these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis	We have a robust set of policies in place to manage risk and these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. All staff/volunteers are aware of and follow the policies
Before we started using the Quality Mark	8%	38%	30%	24%
As a result of using the Quality Mark	3%	13%	32%	52%

58% of clubs have improved against this outcome. The Quality Mark has helped them to:

- *Made us more aware of the need to regularly update our policies and procedures.*
- *Involving young people in the writing; disseminating the changes*
- *Ensuring that all our policies are up to date.*
- *Importance of having these set of policies in place and having them regularly updated.*
- *By recommending improvements to policies and procedures such as risk assessments.*
- *The Quality Mark provided us with an opportunity to review all of our policies and practices. Many of the policies hadn't been reviewed in a while. There were some that needed implementing from scratch. The Quality Mark provided the organisation with the time to carry out this important piece of work.*
- *Our Child Protection is better.*
- *Our code of conduct is improved and we have been able to use this to resolve staffing issues*

Involving Young People

The fourth outcome relates to how the Quality Mark has helped clubs to improve their mechanisms for involving young people. It shows that high level involvement of young people has shifted from something that only half of clubs did before engaging in the Quality Mark, to something that 69% of clubs do now.

Figure 18: Involving Young People

	We don't involve young people in the management or delivery of the club	We consult young people when we want to make changes to what we do	Young people are involved in all aspects of managing and delivery at the club	Young people take the lead on making decisions about what happens at the club
Before we started using the Quality Mark	11%	37%	29%	23%
As a result of using the Quality Mark	4%	27%	31%	38%

42% of clubs have improved against this outcome. The Quality Mark has helped them to:

- *Raised awareness of the importance of including young people at all levels. Although with our target group of young people it is not always possible. The more targeted the funding is the more difficult it is to involve the young people as our target group is anti-social, disengaged young people.*
- *We have plans to improve the youth leadership in our organisation as of the next academic year. E.g. partnership with Access Sport (introduced by London Youth) will mean we can get 4 YP trained as coaches and young leaders. We are increasing youth leadership in Saturday Schools / work experience etc.*
- *It has helped us to concentrate the attention of the board on this matter*
- *Being relatively new, it has demonstrated how to progress with young people and the organisations to be involved with.*
- *Helped us further develop this strength of the organisation.*
- *Going forward we acknowledge that we would like young people involved in all aspects of the organisation. We have been motivated through the Quality Mark to take this step as it will have a beneficial impact on everyone.*
- *To achieve the Gold award we are setting up a Youth Forum to help engage teenage girls, who currently are under-represented in the club*

Youth Offer

The final outcome considered the youth offer – the opportunities and services the club offers to young people. It shows that the Quality Mark has the least impact on this outcome, with

only a slight shift in clubs who offer a basic range of opportunities to those that offer a more comprehensive range.

Figure 19: Youth Offer

	Our offer to young people is limited	We offer a basic range of opportunities and services	We offer a comprehensive range of opportunities and services	We offer a comprehensive range of opportunities and services that young people told us they needed
Before using the Quality Mark	11%	11%	39%	39%
As a result of using the Quality Mark	0%	20%	23%	57%

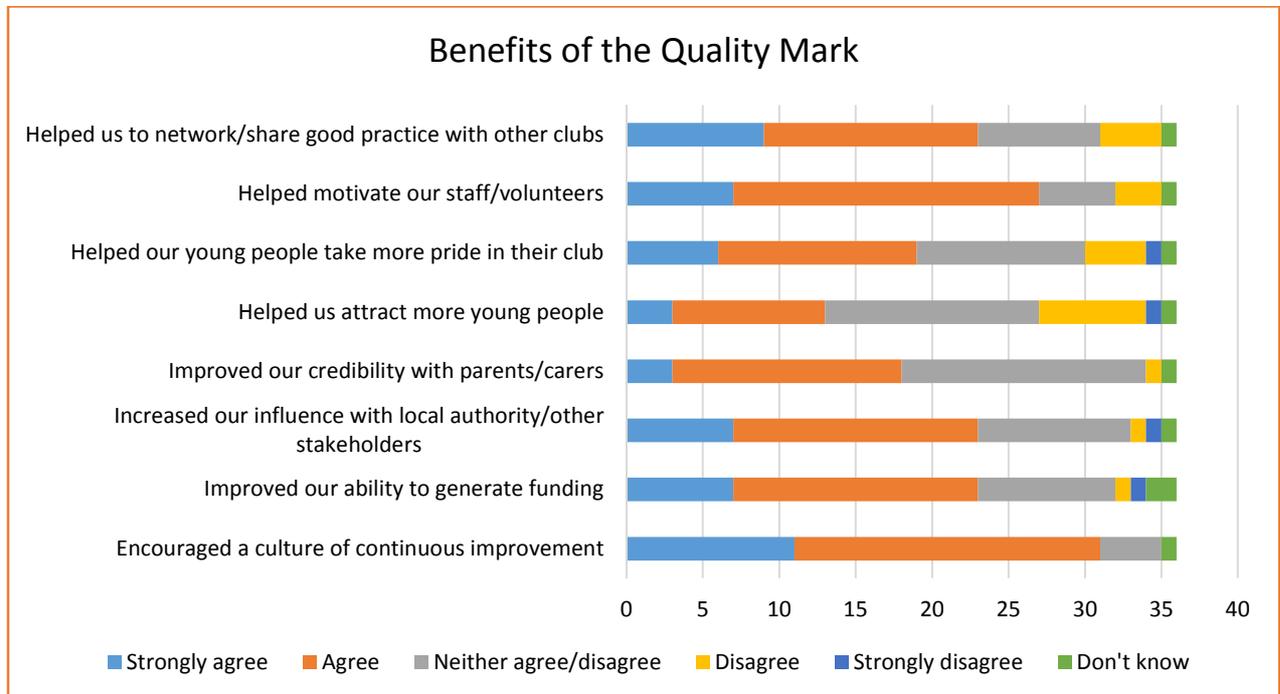
30% of clubs have improved against this outcome. The Quality Mark has helped them to:

- *It has helped us develop new projects and improve some existing ones.*
- *The process we have undergone through the Quality Mark has shown us that we are meeting the needs of the beneficiaries we work. There is room for improvement in ensuring that any future services come from and are directed by young people.*
- *Exposure to lots of other opportunities , more funding , training , activities*

Benefits of the Quality Mark

Figure 20 below shows the overall benefits of the Quality Mark.

Figure 20: Quality Mark benefits



86% of clubs agree that the Quality Mark has helped encourage a culture of continuous improvement in the organisation and 75% say it has helped them to motivate staff and volunteers.

“I think it will encourage a culture of continuous improvement, improve our ability to generate funding, help young people take more pride in their club, help us network/share good practice and improve our credibility with parents/carers”

“It was a good exercise for a new staff member as it helps them find out how things work”

“It helps staff to focus minds on what is evidence and what they should be looking at on a daily basis”

“It was good for our coaches to see that we are a professional outfit”

“It has improved teamwork and cohesion with staff and young people”

64% agree that it has helped them to generate funding and has increased their influence with local stakeholders. Most clubs were unsure whether having the Quality Mark had a direct impact on the success of funding applications, with most feeling that it was ‘useful, but not the deciding factor’. However, some were able to point to specific examples where it had a direct impact, and others have seen how it has changed how they are perceived by funders or other stakeholders.

“It has placed us on the roadmap with other organisations to demonstrate that we have gone through a detailed process and achieved quality marks and I sense has elevated our status with London Youth too as a good organisation” (Club)

“We secured £38k in funding from the Lambeth YLC, and then had to submit a 9-page spreadsheet for due diligence. We had the best rating of green flags amongst any group applying, while a number of groups had to turn down funding because they could not meet the criteria. We were only in this position due to having recently completed the Bronze Award” (Club)

“Having the Quality Mark and the City & Guild accreditation is politically important locally. It has given us more ammunition when dealing with the council and we can now be less submissive to the council demands. It has changed the relationship, we now have more power in discussions with the council’s youth service” (Club)

“Hackney council said they wanted all their providers to have the London Youth Quality Mark, they were very pro it and we felt funders were really interested in it”

“The main reason for doing it was the opportunities it provided – within a week we had support from London Youth. We wanted to start a football team and London Youth helped them access the Level 1 funding. We were also connected to Access Sport who are prepared to give them £4K of funding”

“The Council now see us as a bona fide group”

And 64% say it has helped them to network with other clubs.

“We are part of a network now – building relationships with other organisations. We are keen to do more networking”

“We have been encouraging other clubs to get the Quality Mark”

However, clubs do not feel that the Quality Mark has a direct impact on young people. Only 36% agree that the Quality Mark has helped them attract more young people and 50% say it has helped build their credibility with parents/carers. This was borne out in our visits and interviews with clubs, where most felt that young people were not interested or aware of the Quality Mark and that it wasn’t an important factor for young people or parents on deciding what club they should attend.

“It doesn’t matter to young people – they benefit by being part of a high quality club, but they don’t know about the Quality Mark”

“The parents aren’t interested – one year 6 boy we are working with has been excluded from school for violence, and his mum was also involved in a fight inside the school building – people like that don’t care! We are largely seen as a babysitting service – if the kids are out the house then that’s all that matters”

However, clubs that have celebrated the award and promoted the Quality Mark do feel that it matters to young people, and young people who have been involved in the assessment visits have found it useful.

“It matters to the community that they have the award – as they worked for it. Lots of young people wanted to be involved and 2 or 3 were involved in the assessment visit and presented to London Youth. They feel proud as they have contributed. We used public events to promote the awards”

“Our young people know we have it. We had an event to celebrate, got t-shirts made up etc. – it’s important to recognise the achievements, it’s morale boosting”

Some clubs compared the Quality Mark experience to the Jack Petchey Foundation – where young people are directly involved in securing funding for projects of their choosing. They value this much more because they are directly involved and feel responsible for the success. Although the two awards aren’t really comparable as they serve different purposes, this does indicate that for young people to value the Quality Mark then they need to be more involved in the process; one opportunity could be through formally involving them in the assessment visit.

Raising awareness

When speaking to clubs, London Youth staff and wider stakeholders it has become clear that to be truly beneficial, the Quality Mark needs to be widely understood and valued by clubs and funders alike. Promoting the Quality Mark to raise awareness amongst clubs and influencing funders to make it a pre-requisite in funding applications is crucial to its continued success. London Youth does do some work to influence funders, through sitting on the London Funders Group and wider networking, and the John Lyon’s Charity is a big advocate for the Quality Mark and is working to influence other funders to build it into their application processes. From speaking to wider stakeholders as part of this evaluation it is clear that quality systems are valued, but that little is currently known about the London Youth Quality Mark and what assurances it can provide funders.

“The quality mark isn’t something that Comic Relief necessarily looks for – but this may in part be because youth work carried out in youth centres isn’t what we seek to fund under our young people-focussed theme Better Futures. Naturally, if an applicant has the quality mark this would be seen as a positive. In my previous role at the Jack Petchey Foundation, which funds London-based youth centres and organisations, we valued the quality mark as an indicator of a well-run organisation. This didn’t remove the need for our own due diligence of course! But it was certainly viewed positively. (Funder)

“There are lots of different kite marks – the meaning can sometimes get lost and we don’t always understand the difference between them. We have considered giving concessions to groups who have a Quality Mark – but this needs to be formalised. I believe that councils will start to insist on a Quality Mark – we don’t currently but it’s becoming more important for commissioning. But we don’t really know what the Quality Mark covers – London Youth need to let Local Authorities know more about it and its benefits so we can help promote it to clubs. It needs to be recognised more widely to have value” (Local Authority)

Clubs are keen for London Youth to take the lead in raising awareness of the Quality Mark and encouraging funders to take it on board. They see London Youth’s role as encouraging greater take up from other clubs, promoting successful clubs and lobbying funders to make the Quality Mark a pre-requisite for funding. Suggestions from clubs included:

- Persuade local authorities that a London Youth Quality Mark should be a condition of funding for youth organisations.
- Continue to publicise Quality Mark clubs
- Encourage all youth organisations to get on board
- More promotion of the scheme so that it is adopted by more organizations
- Make quality mark a better recognised award and more well known
- Hold an award ceremony. Release list of winners to the press. Profile winners on website.
- Provide benefits to the clubs that are attempting to complete or have completed. This will encourage other Youth organisations to take part.
- Continue to make others aware of it so that the mark increases in value.
- Maintain the high standards of assessment.
- Campaign and promote the Quality Mark in geographic areas where there is less participation or awareness of the Quality Mark.

However, clubs also recognised that they also had a responsibility to promote the Quality Mark. Some do a lot once they have received the award, whereas others do very little. Clubs felt they could:

- Talk to other organisations and encourage them to work towards the award
- Let more people know about it
- Ensure that the Quality Mark is displayed on all promotional material
- Celebrate the achievement within networks and speak positively about the importance of Quality Mark in their work.
- Share the benefits with other partners

London Youth could support clubs to promote the Quality Mark by providing advice and support post-award to do this.

Conclusions

Overall the Quality Mark is a positive experience for the vast majority of clubs. Most clubs engage for mainly extrinsic reasons of external recognition, access to funding and providing an independent 'badge' of quality. And the City Bridge funding is a big incentive, without which many would not have engaged.

However, regardless of whether clubs engaged to achieve external validation of what they already do, or whether they use it as a tool for continuous improvement, clubs felt that the Quality Mark met their needs and the vast majority saw some changes to what they do as a result. Most clubs do not have an existing quality award in place and for those that do the Quality Mark provides a different emphasis; focusing on the quality of youth provision.

Overall satisfaction is high, particularly with how helpful and supportive the team are at London Youth, however satisfaction with the information provided beforehand and the Getting Started meeting is lower than other areas; improvements to these would help break down barriers to engagement.

Clubs value the support provided by London Youth, and despite a recent shift in emphasis from one to one intensive support to more reactive support, clubs are still satisfied. However, some clubs do want more support and there is a need to provide more intensive support to smaller clubs who are struggling to achieve the Quality Mark. Better data also needs to be captured on the status of 'pending' clubs, to ensure that any that have stalled are supported to re-engage.

Clubs and stakeholders feel that the Quality Mark is relevant and contains appropriate indicators for youth clubs, with the progression from Bronze, Silver and Gold being pitched at the appropriate levels. The standard is continually reviewed and this ensures it is kept relevant and up to date. The recent review by City & Guilds has found the Quality Mark to meet all its requirements and they are happy to continue to externally accredit it. And most clubs value the robustness of the assessment process and feel that the work involved is appropriate. There is some perception of duplication of evidence; the reasons for this needs to be better explained to clubs. And an online system would be valued by some, but not all, as a way to streamline the process. Although most found the assessment visits useful, and are an important part of the process, improving these to include more observation of activity and interviews with staff and young people would add value to the evidence review.

The two main areas that need reviewing relate to the re-accreditation process and the involvement of young people. Most clubs we spoke to are not prepared to start from scratch after three years and would rather withdraw, and there is a feeling amongst some clubs and the London Youth team that the involvement of young people could be improved beyond the current young assessor visit.

Overall the experience has been a positive one for clubs, the majority have shown improvements to the way they work. They have seen tangible changes in terms of improved policies and access to funding, but also intangible changes such as increased morale, confidence and pride. Many clubs point to the feeling of being more professional, and the way they are perceived by external stakeholders and funders as being one of the main benefits of achieving the Quality Mark. However, there is a clear need to raise the profile of

the Quality Mark amongst clubs and funders alike; achieving a critical mass of support will result in it being a recognised brand.

“The whole experience has been really positive. We are much more up to date with policies etc.; it has been invaluable having the push to do that. It’s been really good being able to share with project volunteers and also colleagues in other departments what we’re doing. It has encouraged a more coherent approach to service delivery. The opportunities for staff development / funding opportunities have been thick and fast. I’m currently on the leadership and management training course delivered by London Youth, and one of our volunteers is about to go on FA training, and we’ve been recommended to Access Sport by London Youth and are now in the process of getting £4,000 to run a football project.”

“It has given us much more credibility and confidence in what we do”

“It has brought about a sense of pride amongst staff and volunteers. Although we believe we would have received the funding we have since obtaining the Quality Mark it was good to add it to applications for funding, especially those that had specifically asked about quality marks. It was also useful to add it to an application even when not asked. Perhaps it was more useful than we think.”

Learning to action: achieving excellence

It is clear that overall the Quality Mark is achieving its objectives and there are no major concerns with the way it works. Instead of identifying weaknesses in its approach, the evaluation has instead highlighted some areas that can move the Quality Mark from good to excellent.

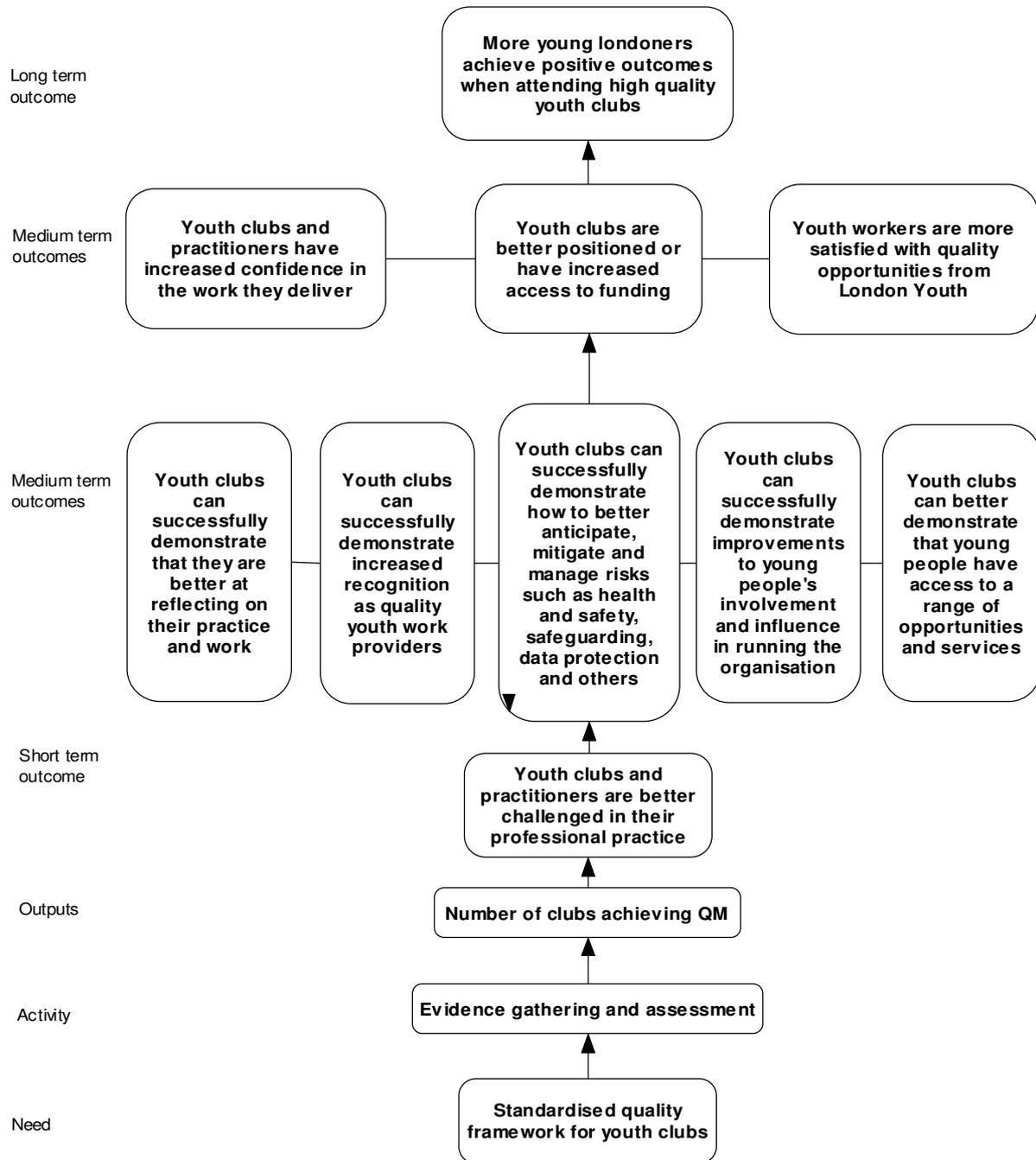
The insight captured as a result of this evaluation has been translated into a number of questions for consideration by London Youth. At the learning to action workshop these were prioritised and specific actions discussed, which are shown in Appendix 3.

Figure 21: Recommendations

Support for clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can this be enhanced within current resource constraints?
Efficient processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there simpler ways of collecting evidence to avoid duplication and can an online tool help make the Quality Mark interactive as well as easier for clubs to upload evidence? Improving management information on clubs – how can progress be monitored to ensure clubs are on track?
Re-accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can this add value and be robust without going over old ground?
Standards of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the assessment visits add value?

Involving young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can it be meaningful but not onerous?
Youth offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should the Quality Mark encourage greater improvements to what opportunities clubs provide?
Promoting and influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can London Youth do to support clubs, promote the wider benefits and influence funders?
Encouraging clubs to measure impact and ongoing evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can the quality mark encourage clubs to measure the impact of what they do within resource constraints?• How can evaluation be embedded within the Quality Mark process?

Appendix 1: Theory of Change



Appendix 2: E-survey

About you/your club

1. Name

Role

Role in the QM process
2. How many paid staff does your club employ?
 - None
 - Less than 5
 - 5-10
 - More than 10
3. What stage are you at
 - Working towards Bronze
 - Achieved Bronze
 - Achieved Silver
 - Achieved Gold
4. Who in your organisation has been involved in the QM process? (tick all that apply)
 - Board/trustees
 - Chief Officer
 - Youth work team
 - Volunteers
 - Young people
 - Just me!

The process

5. What were the 3 **main** reasons you decided to apply for the QM?
 - To prove that we are already a good quality club
 - For external recognition and credibility amongst our stakeholders
 - So we can see how we compare to other clubs
 - To help us secure funding
 - To help motivate our staff/volunteers
 - To promote organisational learning
 - To improve what we do
 - To provide us with a management framework
 - To help secure a dedicated resource for quality management/continuous improvement
 - Because London Youth told us we had to
 - Other (please state)
6. What other quality marks do you hold/use?

- None
- IIP
- PQASSO
- ISO9001
- EFQM
- IIV
- Other (please state)

7. How does the LY QM compare to these other quality marks?

	London Youth QM is better	About the same	London Youth QM is worse
Time/resources needed to complete evidence folder			
Support available			
Benefits as a result of obtaining it			

8. Are there any lessons from other quality marks that could be applied to the London Youth QM?

9. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the London Youth QM?

	1 – not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
The information provided beforehand											
The getting started meeting											
The information provided to help you complete your folder											
LY staff were helpful and supportive											

The assessment process											
Communication provided by London Youth throughout the process											

If you are dissatisfied for any reason, please tell us why

10. How could the application/assessment process be improved?

11. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
The QM indicators measure the right things						
The time/resources needed to obtain the QM is appropriate						
The QM encourages improvements/changes to what we do						
The type/level of evidence needed is appropriate						
The framework reflects what is important to young people						
The three levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold) are pitched at an appropriate level						

12. Is there anything missing from the Quality Mark indicators that could be included or improved? (For example programme design, evaluation standards?)

13. What do you believe are the most important factors of a useful Quality Mark? (Please rank the following each from most important to least important)

- How easy it is to complete
- The time it takes to go through the process
- The indicators/what it measures are appropriate to my organisation
- Robustness of the assessment process – which gives certainty that all clubs who achieve the QM are good quality
- External accreditation (e.g. by City and Guilds)
- Funding from City Bridge to help achieve the standard
- The support provided
- The opportunity to network/learn from similar organisations

14. Have you been involved in the re-accreditation process? (clubs that have held the QM for 3 years need to be re-accredited)

- Yes
- Not yet – but we will seek re-accreditation when it's time to
- Not yet – we aren't yet sure if we'll seek re-accreditation
- Don't know

If yes, how satisfied were you with this process?

How could the re-accreditation process be improved?

If no, how would you like the re-accreditation process to work?

Impact

15. In the table below, please mark each statement (1-4) showing where you were before you started using the QM, and where you are now, as a result of using the QM.

	1	2	3	4	How has the QM helped?
Reflective practice	We don't have any formal mechanisms or processes for reflecting on what we do and making changes	We respond to feedback from staff/volunteers and young people and use this feedback to make changes to what we do – but on an ad hoc basis	We actively seek feedback from staff/volunteers and young people and have a process for making changes based on this feedback	We have a culture of continuous improvement where we regularly reflect on what we do and seek to make improvements – this is embedded at	

				all level of the organisation	
Recognition	People aren't really aware of what we do	We have limited methods of promoting what we do	We have a range of method to promote what we do to a range of stakeholders	We are well known as a provider of good quality youth work	
Managing risk	We don't have all the necessary policies in place to manage risks such as health and safety, safeguarding, data protection etc.	We have all the basic policies in place to manage risk	We have a robust set of policies in place to manage risk and these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis	We have a robust set of policies in place to manage risk and these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. All staff/volunteers are aware of and follow the policies	
Involving YP	We don't involve young people in the management or delivery of the club	We consult young people when we want to make changes to what we do	Young people are involved in all aspects of managing and delivery at the club	Young people take the lead on making decisions about what happens at the club	
Youth offer	Our offer to young people is limited	We offer a basic range of opportunities and services	We offer a comprehensive range of opportunities and services	We offer a comprehensive range of opportunities and services that young people told us they needed	

Benefits of QM

16. Thinking about the benefits of the QM, please state the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements. The London Youth QM has:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Encouraged a culture of continuous improvement						
Improved our ability to generate funding						
Increased our influence with local authority/other stakeholders						
Improved our credibility with parents/carers						
Helped us attract more young people						
Helped our young people take more pride in their club						
Helped motivate our staff/volunteers						
Helped us to network/share good practice with other clubs						

17. Overall what difference has achieving or working towards the QM made to your club?

18. What could London Youth do to maximise the benefits of the QM?

19. What could your club do to maximise the benefits of the QM?

Appendix 3: Action plan

The table below shows the objectives and actions developed at the learning to action workshop. More work will be needed by London Youth to further refine and prioritise these actions.

The priority areas considered in the workshop were:

- Re-accreditation process
- Involving young people
- Embedding ongoing evaluation
- Support for clubs
- Promoting and influencing

Theme	Objectives	Actions
Re-accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of clubs maintain the Quality Mark • Maintain high quality youth sector • Minimise resource requirements • Influence external stakeholders (increasing confidence through re-accreditation) • Encourage greater reflection/ embed continuous learning and improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop options for re-accreditation – criteria and scenarios for different re-accreditation routes • LY to provide checklist of policies that need to be reviewed – additional support by programme teams • Clubs to provide list of policies and review dates • Encourage clubs to plan how they will sustain the award from the start – build into action plan following award • Annual review visits – could be carried out by Gold clubs/bank of mentors. Visit to include observation and interviews with staff/young people • Self-assessment and review, followed by visit • Continuous improvement action plans developed following visit identifying what has improved and capture distance travelled • Review process could form the basis of a funding bid
Involving young people (in assessments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it meaningful for young people • Add insight for London Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people in clubs to assess – carry out interviews/focus group with young people as part of the visit

Theme	Objectives	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure it's useful for the club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop bank of YP mentors from Gold club members – to assess but also provide support to clubs throughout the process • Provide training for YP assessors • Matching/buddying between clubs • Embed young assessor visit within development of DARE – test appetite for additional incentives in form of training/accreditation • Look to recruit from YP who are training to be youth workers as work experience placement • Encourage clubs to develop a quality assurance group of young people within the club to act as peer assessors
Support for clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide best opportunity for clubs to engage • Ensure level playing field for all clubs • Continuous support to embed culture of continuous improvement (CPD opportunities) • Increase clubs achieving the Quality Mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop bank of experts/mentors from clubs and other support organisations • Develop training/CPD opportunities for individuals in clubs working through the Quality Mark • RAG rate each club based on progress to identify specific support needs • Signposting to resources/training/support – online folder can be interactive and be linked to guidance and support • Link training to QM indicators • Develop FAQs, do's and don'ts, checklist • Improve written information provided at Getting Started meeting • Involve Programme Teams in providing support • Provide template policies • Develop resource bank • Create blog/forum to facilitate peer support

Theme	Objectives	Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales pitch document to promote the benefits
Ongoing evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually learn and improve Capture the benefits and promote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new evaluation for each club to complete (incorporate distance travelled tool developed for this evaluation) Carry out small sample of telephone interviews each year Review self-evaluation tool
Promoting and influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition and respect Encourage buy-in from non QM clubs Encourage funders to buy-in/value the QM Sell the USP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop written promoting/influencing strategy Website – updates and social media to promote Encourage Ambition to be national advocate Wider networking – London Funders, GLA, Cabinet Office, BIG Capture endorsements from stakeholders Develop communications plan to include events/conferences etc. Better certificate – plaque/banner Capture case studies which demonstrate the impact and journey Present evaluation findings to stakeholders Develop external stakeholder newsletter Include section on QM in existing newsletter to members