

Youth Investment Fund Quality Standards Guidance



**YOUTH
INVESTMENT
FUND**

Introduction

The YIF (Youth Investment Fund) seeks organisations, partnerships, and consortiums to access funding for new / renewed facilities that will deliver **additional positive activities for young people aged 11-18** (up to 25 for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

The fund is being delivered by **Social Investment Business (SIB)**, in partnership with the **National Youth Agency (NYA)**, **Key Fund** and **Resonance** to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of young people
- Equip young people with skills for work and life
- Empower young people to be active members of their community and society
- Level up provision in selected eligible areas of England

The purpose of the YIF Quality Standards is to support and celebrate high quality youth work as this provides the best outcomes for young people. Youth work happens in a variety of spaces and places, and the trusted adults that deliver youth work range from volunteers to part time or full time professionally qualified practitioners.

Youth work can operate in traditional youth work settings, as well as within allied sectors such as the uniformed sector, health and sport. Whilst not all youth sector providers may call their workforce youth workers, overwhelmingly across the youth sector, providers are applying the same principles and values to their work with young people. The term youth work(er) applies to all projects, programmes and providers who use trusted adults to build supportive relationships with young people.

The Quality Standards Framework enables organisations, however large or small, to reflect upon and review the services they offer to young people. The NYA is committed to providing sector support in youth work practice, this may include direct support, alongside the support provided by the YIF Relationship Manager and sector experts in other key areas e.g., construction.

A set of three Quality Standards have been developed in response to the YIF objectives. These align to the NYA's professional, statutory, and regulatory body (PRSB) functions, sector quality standards ([NYA Quality Mark](#)) and wider charitable mission: to transform the lives of young people through quality youth work/provision.

- **Quality Standard 1: Participation**
- **Quality Standard 2: Governance & Leadership**
- **Quality Standard 3: Youth Work Practice**

The Quality Standards Guidance outlines the processes that underpin the Quality Standards Framework, this includes what is expected of organisations applying for YIF and how the NYA will continue to support them through the process. This relational process enables organisations to explore ways to develop their practice from initially considering an application, through to outcomes post completion of their project. There are resources, templates, advice and guidance to support organisations through a developmental process.

Ten keys steps that relate to quality practice (support, tasks and processes) have been identified that should be taken by organisations, partnerships, or consortium applying to the YIF. Following this guidance, utilising the support available and completing the tasks will support your application and demonstrate your intent towards quality practice.

Before you start:

Please ensure you read the [YIF Quality Standards Framework](#) before you proceed. It is likely that you will be at different levels across the standards; your level will inform your development needs and the process is set up to support you on that journey.

A dedicated person from your organisation, partnership¹ or consortium will be required to complete the **Quality Practice self-assessment, Development Plan** and latterly the **Quality Standards Statement**, including the collation of supporting evidence. They should have a good understanding of youth work and be able to make decisions.

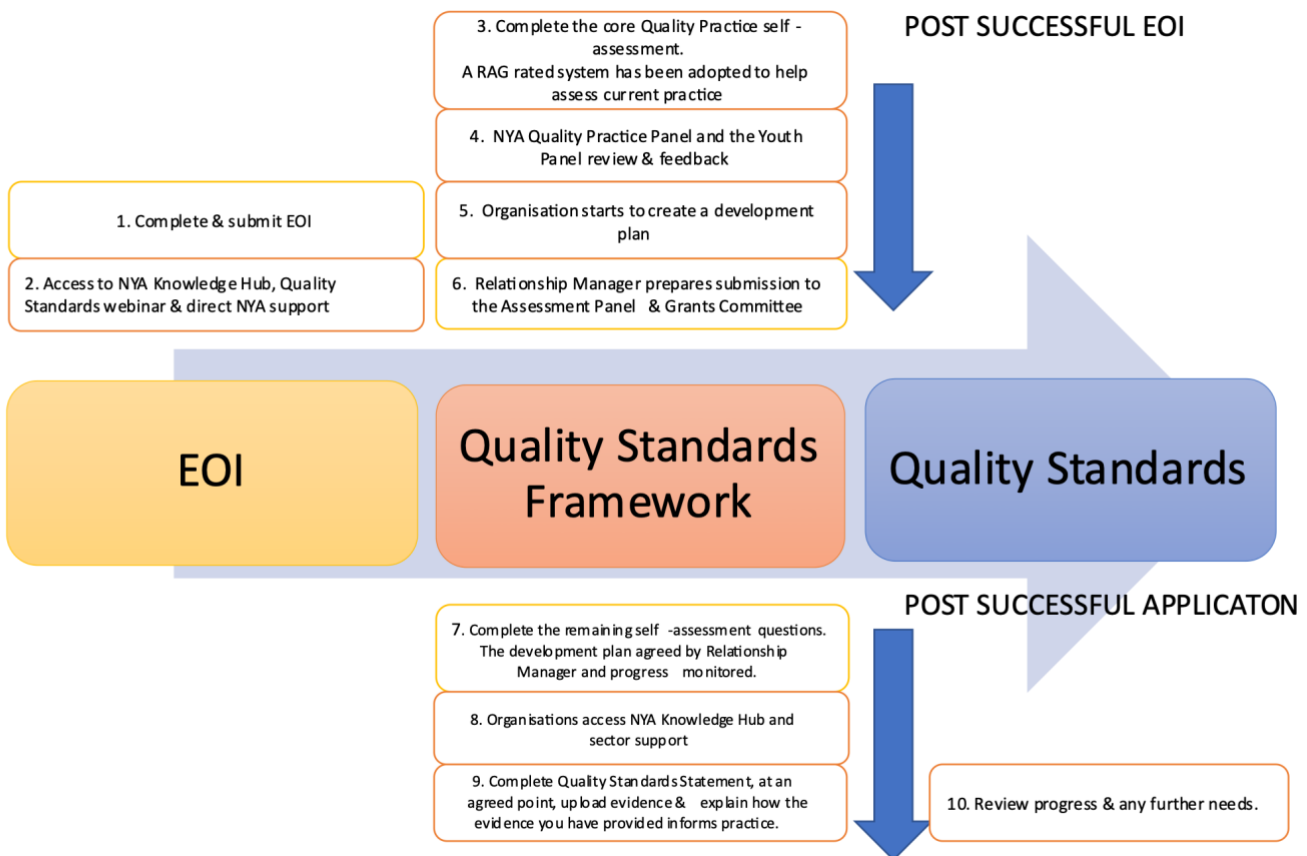
Ensure you access strategic support throughout this process. It is recommended that you work with trustees, senior leaders, youth worker(s), partners, and young people to help you complete the self-assessment and Quality Standards statement.

II) Privacy Statement

Your data will not be shared with any other third parties not involved in the Youth Investment Fund and will only be used for administrative purposes in relation to the fund and for its duration. All data sharing will be in accordance with current data protection regulations.

The full privacy policy for The Social Investment Business can be found at <https://www.sibgroup.org.uk/data-privacy-policy>

III) Quality Standards - Flowchart 1



¹ It is expected that partner/consortium organisations will work together to complete and respond to the YIF Quality Standards. This may require the organisation(s) that are responsible for direct delivery with young people to lead on the completion of the Quality Youth Work Practice self-assessment, completion of a Development Plan and latterly the Quality Practice Statement

IV) The Youth Investment Fund Quality Standards 10 key steps to success

Step 1	Expression of Interest (EOI)	Page 4
Step 2	How to access support and information	Page 4
Step 3	Quality Practice self- assessment	Page 4
Step 4	Sector expert feedback & guidance	Page 7
Step 5	Submission to Grant Panel	Page 7
Step 6	Creating your development plan	Page 7
Step 7	Monitoring progress	Page 8
Step 8	NYA Knowledge Hub and sector support	Page 8
Step 9	How to complete the Quality Standards statement	Page 9
Step 10	Review of progress	Page 10

Step 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)

Check whether you meet the eligibility criteria [here](#) and that your project will operate in a selected eligible area, complete the EOI and a member of the SIB team will be in touch.

Partnership or consortium applications should have a lead organisation who will be accountable for the grant funding and act as the main point of contact during the application process. For some applications the lead organisation will also be involved in delivering youth services. For other applications a separate organisation will lead youth services.

Your EOI may identify some immediate areas for development, with timebound actions, to ensure organisations are legally compliant and that quality youth work practice is aligned to the Capital and Revenue plans.

Step 2. How to access support and information

The Quality Standards Framework process begins post EOI, however, to enable early preparations the guidance, templates and documentation are all open-source documents and can be accessed via the [NYA Knowledge Hub](#).

The NYA Knowledge Hub provides access to a range of themed resources and learning opportunities (webinars, toolkits, policy, training, forums etc) and will be continually developed to ensure resources respond to the identified needs of organisations.

A webinar that explains the Quality Standards Framework, including the self- assessment, development plan and final Quality Standards Statement will be delivered each funding cycle, with the opportunity to ask questions at the end. A pre-recorded version can also be found on the NYA Knowledge Hub.

The NYA will also provide sector support in youth work practice, this may include direct support, alongside that provided by the Relationship Manager and specialist experts in other key areas e.g., construction. Whilst the Relationship Manager will always be your first point of contact you can also email yifenquiries@nya.org.uk to access further information or guidance.

Step 3 Quality practice self- assessment

Organisations will be asked to complete a Youth Work Practice self-assessment; this process has been designed to enable you to assess your organisation's status and development needs in relation to quality youth work practice and maps directly to the Quality Standards. You can access an example template via the [NYA Knowledge Hub](#) . A link to the self-assessment will be provided by your Relationship Manager.

All partner organisations or consortiums working directly with young people are expected to respond to the Quality Practice self-assessment.

If you are part of/belong to a national body, you may wish to seek support and guidance from them. They may be able to provide you with common responses to questions. You should ensure any common responses relate to actual practice.

You will be asked to respond to three themed areas of practice. There is also a section to be completed by young people who have been involved in the design and development of your plans for your YIF proposal or who attend your provision. A range of supportive resources, webinars and tools can be accessed via the [NYA Knowledge Hub](#).

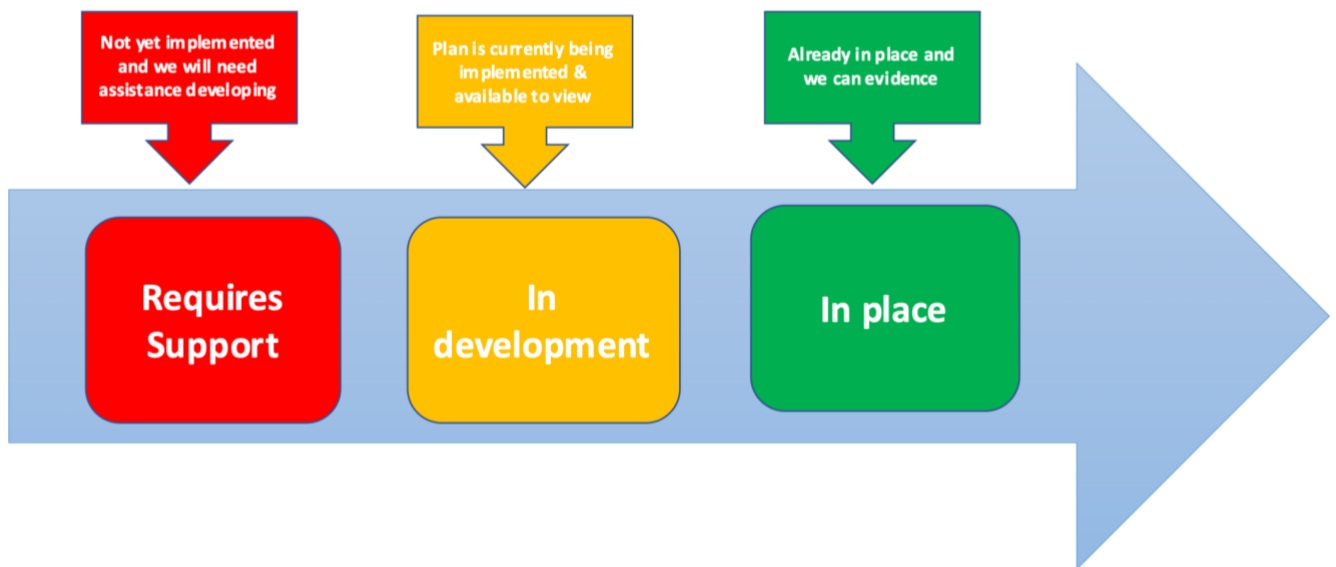
Diagram 1 – Quality practice self-assessment themes



Carefully read the questions and consider whether you have the appropriate measures in place to evidence quality practice, remember to refer to the YIF criteria and [YIF Quality Standards](#) for guidance. Please note the external factors, notably government policy, laws, and legislation, that inform work with young people, links to legislation have been provided to support your practice and development needs.

A RAG rated system has been adopted to help you assess your current practice. The self-assessment process encourages you to work through each of the three themes and rate your organisation's current practice. RAG systems provide a clear colour coded overview to help you identify which areas you need to focus on and support the development of action plans. It is highly likely that you will have different ratings across the self-assessment, this is to be expected and will help you to prioritise actions.

Diagram 2 – Quality Practice self-assessment



Ensure you prepare and gather the information you require to complete the self-assessment. We are not looking for long statements; statements should be concise (up to 150 words). You can work through the self-assessment at your own pace; your work can be saved and is editable until you press SUBMIT.

Youth Participation

Sharing power with young people is a fundamental principle of the YIF. This includes ensuring the voices of young people are loud and clear throughout the programme, including informing decision making. As part of the YIF assessment process, Young Assessors are working to a set of three criteria all of which relate directly to the YIF Quality Standards and are covered in section b of the self-assessment.

Section b in the self-assessment requires input from young people that are involved in your provision. Whilst we would prefer young people to write this section, we appreciate that on some occasions it may be appropriate to act as a scribe. If this is the case for you, please ensure that young people have agreed statements that you make on their behalf.

Young people have also been asked to submit a short audio/video about their involvement in the project. This should be submitted at the same time as the self-assessment is completed. Please ensure you follow the instruction carefully. We appreciate that you may be working with young people who find this task difficult, or perhaps you are in the early stages of development and are not yet working with an established group. Please talk to your Relationship Manager and we will consider other ways to connect with young people.

We would suggest that you consider developing an approach with young people that captures the project's progress and how young people's involvement has informed this progress. This can be used as supporting evidence when you write your final Quality Standards Statement and provide you with an excellent journal of Participation.

An example self-assessment template can be accessed from the [NYA Knowledge Hub](#).

Step 4 Sector expert feedback & guidance

The Youth Work Practice self-assessment will be reviewed by the NYA Quality Practice Panel and the young assessors that make up the Youth Panel².

The Youth Panel will submit their findings from the assessment to the NYA Quality Practice Panel and the YIF Assessment Panel. This will support the overall assessment of applications to the fund and inform the recommendations to organisations for consideration and inclusion in their development plan. Organisations with required actions or areas of significant development may receive sector specialist support.

Step 5 Submission to Youth Investment Fund Assessment Panel and Grant Committee

The Quality Practice self-assessment will support your Stage 2 application, inform the creation of a development plan and if successful, form part of the grant agreement. Remember, you will be able to update your self-assessment once it has been assessed and your development plan has been agreed. The NYA and your Relationship Manager will monitor your progress and support where appropriate.

The YIF Assessment Panel will consider the quality of your youth work offer and engagement with young people in your bid, the resilience of the lead applicant and project plans, as well as the viability of the project.

In making funding decisions, the YIF Assessment Panel will also consider:

- To what extent you have involved young people in the development of your project
- The strength of your project:
- Your youth offer – how it will expand access to youth services for local young people

The Grant Committee are responsible for approving applications as well as making recommendations for future grant rounds and reviewing awarded grants against the Fund's objectives on a quarterly basis.

Step 6 Creating your Development Plan

Once you have completed and submitted the Quality Practice self-assessment, you will have time to reflect on your assessment and the feedback you received from the NYA Quality Practice panel. All organisations will be required to create and submit a development plan as part of the grant process.

The development plan should respond to the areas you have identified in your self-assessment and align to your organisational goals, this must include any elements that have been highlighted Red or Amber. Organisations should strive for green across all areas. Please remember to use the [NYA Knowledge Hub](#) and take advantage of the support mechanisms in place.

Remember, your development plan will form part of your grant agreement

Ensure your areas for development are SMART

- **S**pecific (simple, sensible, significant)
- **M**easurable (meaningful, motivating)
- **A**chievable (agreed, attainable)
- **R**elevant (reasonable, realistic, and resourced, results-based)
- **T**ime bound (time-based, time limited/sensitive, time/cost limited)

² The Youth Panel provide independent expertise in the assessment of bids and to assess to what level the applicant involves young people in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of your youth provision.

An example development plan template can be accessed from the [NYA Knowledge Hub](#).

The NYA may be able to provide support during this process, please contact your Relationship Manager to discuss.

You will have access to your development plan through the SIB platform. This can be accessed via your Relationship Manager. You can work through the development plan at your own pace; your work can be saved and is editable until you press SUBMIT.

Organisational Development Plan				
Name of organisation		Reference No.		
Identify Areas for Improvement	Priority *H/M/L/NA	Action	By when	Outcome
1. Participation				
2. Governance & Leadership				
3. Youth Work Practice				
4. Young Peoples				
Any other comments:				
Completed by		*H= High, M=Medium, L=Low, NA = Not applicable		
Date				
Signed NYA				

Step 7 Monitoring progress

Organisations that have been awarded a grant will continue to work on their development plans³ as agreed and stated in the grant agreement.

The NYA Quality Practice panel will monitor, record developments, collate case studies and quality assure the process to ensure we [NYA] are providing a quality service and responding to the emerging needs of organisations.

Step 8 NYA Knowledge Hub & sector support

The NYA Knowledge Hub will remain available to you, with new resources to match the needs of organisations. Some organisations may continue to receive direct sector professional support depending on their development status and needs.

Contact your Relationship Manager or email yifenquiries@nya.org.uk if you require any additional support.

³ If you do not sufficiently respond to development needs and/or actions this could affect your grant. The NYA and Relationship Manager will monitor progress. The NYA reserves the right to take essential steps if an organisation is not practicing safely.

Step 9 How to complete the Quality Standards statement

You are not required to complete the Quality Standards Statement or provide evidence until you have implemented your development plan. This can be done at your own pace but will need to be completed to coincide with your grant agreement. This is a good opportunity for key colleagues and young people to meet and reflect on your progress, a time to celebrate your achievements and to identify areas that you wish to continue developing.

Read the Quality Standards and write a statement that best reflects your practice. Some areas may still be in development and this will not be detrimental to your application; it is useful to identify and capture your intentions. Please remember to use the SMART principles you adopted for the development plan and keep your statement within 100 words. Whilst you are undergoing this process, we would advise you to consider the evidence that supports your statement.

- [Quality Standard 1: Participation](#)
- [Quality Standard 2: Governance & Leadership](#)
- [Quality Standard 3: Youth Work Practice](#)

Sources of evidence:

This process does not seek to create a large folder of evidence, please only provide core documentation that enables the NYA to assess against the indicators.

Please ensure you provide sufficient evidence. The following is a guide, and you may have other suitable documents.

As a general guide, evidence should respond to the full scope of the Quality Standards and needs to be:

- **Reliable** - evidence is dependable, and it comes from a trusted source.
- **Valid** - it needs to be directly relevant to the audit indicator and within timescale that is appropriate to the indicator, in general this would be 6-24 months.
- **Sufficient** - it must be enough to provide a sound basis for judgement.

Practical sources of evidence might include the following: policies, strategy documents and delivery plans, reports, evidence of outcomes and impact, minutes, training calendar and so on.

The following quality marks (within valid period) may be accepted as sources of evidence:

- [NYA Quality Mark](#)
- [NYA Hear by Right](#)
- [London Youth Quality Assurance Programme](#)
- [Investors In People \(IIP\)](#)
- [YPQI \(Centre for Youth Impact\)](#)
- [NCVO – Investing in Volunteers \(IiV\) & IiV Essentials](#)
- [Trusted Charity \(PQASSO\)](#)
- [Charity Essentials](#)
- [ISO 9000](#)

Ensure all evidence has been saved in an electronic folder, if possible, scans of documents can be uploaded. Alternatively, you could develop a folder of hard copies and submit this as evidence. Please ensure you respect Privacy Laws, remove identifiable information like names, and contact details where appropriate.

Please ensure you have gathered evidence to support your statement. Once complete please submit your Quality Standards Statement to your Relationship Manager and they will share with the NYA Quality Practice Panel. Once reviewed the NYA will share a statement that acknowledges your progress and where appropriate provide additional guidance.

Your self- assessment, development plan and Quality Standards Statement will also be useful to organisations that are considering applying for the National Youth Agency Quality Mark or similar quality assurance schemes.

Step 10 Review of progress

Regular reviews will take place to monitor progress. Dates will be agreed with your Relationship Manager and the NYA's YIF National Programme Manager. The final assessment will be scheduled to take place 12 months after your grant approval, but an earlier date (and in exceptional cases a later date) could be negotiated through your Relationship Manager and NYA's YIF National Programme Manager.

Appendix 1 - Key roles

Relationship Manager – a member of the YIF partnership team who will work with you to gather more information and submit a report for the assessment panel.

YIF (Youth Investment Fund) Assessment Panel - the Panel will consider the quality of your youth work offer and engagement with young people in your bid, the resilience of the lead applicant and project plans, as well as the viability of the project.

YIF Grants Committee - The Grants Committee are responsible for approving applications as well as making recommendations for future grant rounds and reviewing awarded grants against the fund's objectives on a quarterly basis.

Youth Panel - the Panel provides independent expertise in the assessment of bids and to assess to what level the applicant involves young people in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of your youth provision. The assessment is based on seven agreed criteria, three (3) of which relate directly to the Quality Standards.

NYA Quality Practice Panel - the quality practice panel is made up of a range of professionals with a wide range of experience across the youth sector. The panel will review all self-assessments and provide supportive feedback and guidance.

Appendix 2 - Key Terms

Vision: The long term changes your organisation would like to achieve, as aspiration for the future. This helps to direct the work of organisations.

National Occupational Standards (NOS): The Youth Work National Occupational Standards (NOS) aim to define the competencies required to carry out the functions carried out by the youth work workforce.

EEDI (Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion): ensures fair treatment and opportunity for all. It aims to eradicate prejudice and discrimination based on an individual or groups of individuals' protected characteristics.

Health & Safety (safe practice): The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. It is sometimes referred to as HSWA, the HSW Act, the 1974 Act or HASAWA.

It sets out the general duties which:

- employers have towards employees and members of the public
- employees have to themselves and to each other
- certain self-employed have towards themselves and others

Safeguarding (safe practice): every organisation and its individual staff members have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the young people they are working with, from unnecessary risk and/or harm. The protection of young people is based on the principles outlined within the Children's Act 2004 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and Working Together 2018 Guidance.

Contextual Safeguarding: [Contextual Safeguarding](#) is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Asset based approach: Youth work engages with young people as individuals with strengths, assets, potential and lived experiences. Identifying what young people are good at or interested in and building on what can empower young people to have agency over their lives.

Monitoring: A systematic way to collect and record information to check progress and enable evaluation.

Evaluation: The use of information from monitoring and elsewhere to judge and understand the performance of an organisation or project.

Formative Evaluation: take places where there is continuous feedback during a course, programme, or project. It provides information that can be used to adjust or improve the programme as it proceeds.

Summative Evaluation: is carried after the course, programme or project has completed and provided estimates of a programme's effectiveness.

Transformative Evaluation: involves all stakeholders in the process to ensure a holistic view is taken.

Measurement framework: A list of the outcomes that a charity seeks to achieve together with information on indicators of these outcomes; data sources, methods of analysis, and measures of its processes and quality.

Outputs: Products, services or facilities that result from an organisations or project's activities.

Impact: Usually the broad and/or long-term effects of a projects or organisations' activities, outputs, and outcomes, after taking into consideration an estimate of what would have happened anyway (i.e., the outcomes that can be attributed to a project or organisation).

Outcomes: Changes that occur as a result of actions.

Impact measurement: The set of practices through which an organisation establishes what difference its work makes. We use the term to define a broad set of practice that include measuring both outputs and outcomes, this does not mean we equate measuring outputs with measuring impact – it is just part of the overall process.

Social impact: The effect of an activity on the social fabric of a community and the wellbeing of the individuals and families.

GDPR: (General Data Protection Regulations) - [The Data Protection Act](#) controls how your personal information is used by organisations, business, or the government. The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the GDPR.

Reflective supervision: regular collaborative meetings between two parties, it is an in-depth conversation about our experiences as practitioners' that focuses on ways to reflect upon values, principles, practices, strengths, and areas for development.