Looking Back

Purpose

• This activity is designed to obtain from young people their views about:
  – whether they feel they have changed in any way since the beginning of the programme, and to identify;
  – how they feel they have changed;
  – what contributed to this change; and
  – what it would take for them to change even more.
• This activity could be used to produce evidence to contribute to recorded outcomes for some individuals.

Preparation

• Photocopy the relevant number of the Looking Back sheets.

Resources

• Copies of Looking Back sheets.
• Pens.

Conducting the activity

• Remind the young people of the youth work activities you wish them to think about. Explain that this activity asks them to identify what they have gained from that experience.
• Give everyone a Looking Back sheet and a pen and go through the questions with them.
• It is helpful to explain that the numbers are entirely individual and are used to indicate where on a scale young people feel they were and are now. It is not a test or a competition and each person’s numbers will probably be different. Generally young people use scaling readily. If some are puzzled prompt with, ‘five is a mid point. Do you think of yourself as being above or below that?’ Explain the numbers are a means of helping them think about their answers to the questions.
• Questions 3, 4, and 5 may need some illustration by way of gentle prompts. For example: Q3 – are there things you know now that you didn’t before? Are there things you can do now you couldn’t before? Are there things you think about, see differently or understand differently? Q4 – Might it be to do with the activities, the workers, your peers, other things? Q5 – What would it take for you to change even more? 
• Remind people there are no right or wrong answers – only responses that mean something to the person filling it in.
• If young people are working in pairs – maybe ‘interviewing’ each other – make sure a sheet is completed for each person. Encourage different rather than duplicate responses.
• Debrief as best suits. In a small group the worker might ask individuals to share their answers with each other. The worker might ask a representative to report key findings to the rest, or alternatively, via discussion, draw on everyone’s contributions to form a verbal summary.
• If you intend to draw together responses from the group ask each person to put their name on the sheet and hand it in. (You may want to photocopy them and return them immediately or return them once you have drawn information from them.)
Capturing and using the evidence

- Make a note of the points raised in the debriefing as these may be additional to ones written on the sheets. You might use both sources of evidence in reports about the work and its outcomes.
- Information from the sheets and discussion can be written up under three headings:
  - changes in young people – how they say they are different;
  - what young people say contributed to these changes; and
  - things young people say will increase the change in them.
- This can be used as a basis for further discussion with individuals perhaps using some of the questions from the interview as prompts.
- With groups it can form part of the process of taking stock and reviewing what has gone on and perhaps inform a discussion of programme planning. It can also be used as an introduction to other activities in the pack (e.g. Looking Back can usefully precede or follow the Wallpaper Walk).

A worker uses **Looking Back** in a discussion with some young people about what they’re getting out of the open access setting they’ve been attending for about six months. He describes what he did and his thoughts about using the activity:

*Five of us sat round a table and I asked them what they thought about what we were doing. I was a bit concerned about using the sheets before but they did help focus. The numbers were a good way to start. I just asked them to think of the past few months and to decide on numbers ... They did it easily and this led into the questions.*

*I asked the questions and they threw in their responses. I thought the first one would be tricky but they could all think of something different in themselves and that’s interesting to know. It wasn’t like putting them on the spot – they just said things and we talked about them for a bit. I went off to get something and I asked if they’d write down their main ideas. They did do it because I said we could use what several people thought and plan more things.*

The worker thought the activity told him quite a lot of what he knew already yet had particular benefits. He gained insights into one young man’s aspirations. ‘I found out X wants to join the project with adults with learning disabilities – that’s the window boxes at Glebe House.’ Overall he thought it was a useful way of obtaining thoughtful ideas and feedback without putting pressure on people. ‘It took about fifteen minutes and they were fine about it. They answered the questions and they could talk about it. I think it did let them think about themselves and that’s important.’

He adds, ‘You’ve got to keep the papers and do something with what they say or else it goes nowhere! They also tell you more than they write down.’
Example:

Looking Back

1. Think back to when you started the programme. How did you feel/what were you like? Give this a number between 1-10, (10 being the highest score and 0 being the lowest.)

At the beginning: 

2. Now you have finished the programme, how do you feel/what are you like? Give this a score between 1 and 10

Now: 

Now think about the change:

3. In what ways have you changed? How are you different now?

I’m a nicer person - calmer
I know more people

4. What caused the change (who, what, how)?

Coming in instead of being out on the streets and messing about.
The trips out
J’s really sound

5. What would it take to increase your final score by 2?

More trips
If we were open more nights especially the one they closed
Recording document:

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Now:

Now think about the change:

3. In what ways have you changed? How are you different now?

4. What caused the change (who, what, how)?

5. What would it take to increase your final score by 2?