**How good is our third sector organisation? - Video transcript for LGBT Youth Scotland**

LGBT Youth Scotland is the largest youth and community-based organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland. The charity seeks to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people, and the wider LGBT community.

This video clip describes LGBT Youth Scotland’s approach to piloting the 'How good is our third sector organisation?' (HGIOTSO) self-evaluation framework and what they learned from this experience.

**Transcript**

**Cara:** My name is Cara Spence. I work for LGBT Scotland.

**Hugh:** I'm Hugh Torrence. I'm Youth Work Director for LGBT Scotland.

**Cara:** I guess that self-evaluation is really important to us as an organisation. It's built into our supervision systems, our planning, and it allows us a chance to really think about what we're doing and continually improve. Getting involved in this process allowed us to think about how we could be ahead of the curve and how we could shape a tool that would be specific to our needs.

**Hugh:** The opportunity to do that for a tool that was specifically for the third sector seemed like a really good opportunity to take. Also, given that we'd had an inspection back in 2010 and some of the - the outcome of that inspection led to us making some fairly big changes in the organisation, we thought it was a really good opportunity to take the time to actually properly evaluate some of those changes that we'd implemented. We looked at a couple of those. The first one was about a young person's learning journey through the organisation. We developed a system called Checkmates, which is a way of us working intensely with a young person as a key worker and following that process through the organisation. Then the second area, which was Cara's team, was around the LGBT Charter of Rights programme.

**Cara:** The LGBT Charter of Rights programme is a tool for organisations to move towards LGBT inclusion, and it looks as policy and practice, and we take them through quite a rigorous process and they have to present a portfolio. We thought it would be useful to examine three key areas - leadership, partnership work, and impact on community. So what we had to do was examine some of the data that we had, using this framework, which was really helpful.

**Hugh:** What we were really keen to do, as part of the learning journey for young people, was to actually think about setting ourselves a bit of a challenge, because it can often be quite easy to evidence the impact on participants. We did look at that area and of course we did find loads of good evidence. What we thought we would try and do is to attach it to another area that was a little bit harder, so we started looking at the key outcome around statutory guidance. We did that really because we wanted to get a better sense of whether or not the work that our staff were doing on the ground is really connected and thoughtful and folks really understanding where that comes from. Really, making those kinds of connections to be able to really support the outcomes of that young person's learning journey and then really be able to understand what the impact is.

**Cara:** In relation to the Charter Mark, I think one of the most interesting areas for us was the impact of our partnership work. So we were gathering lots of data about the journey charter clients were going on, but we hadn't taken a step back and thought about how do we examine our role within this and the impact that we were having? What we found was it was really clear, when we examined the evidence, that actually our role within it was absolutely pivotal. So what we did, as a result of finding that we were lacking some of that evidence, some of our discussions with our charter clients, is we built in some evaluation questions into our end evaluation, which really helped.

**Hugh:** Quite often, the benefit of going through a process like this is that you don't really know what you don't know until you look at it and discover it. There was quite a lot that came out of the process that we thought yeah, we kind of knew that, we've now got evidence for it. But there were a few things that came out as well that we thought, actually, we've not really paid attention to that or thought about it. Certainly, in relation to young people's learning journeys, we hadn't really thought about the quality assurance implications for groups that we manage at an arm's length. So where perhaps another partner runs a group that we advise or support or perhaps where we run a group in partnership with a local authority, the boundaries are slightly different and we have less of an input to some of the staff on the ground there. So it really forced us and helped us to rethink what some of our quality assurance mechanisms were and, as a result, we've set ourselves a few improvements for the year ahead.

**Cara:** In terms of the LGBT Charter Mark, another area that was interesting for us was leadership. We could evidence that organisations felt more confident to lead others and lead the Charter Mark process. But actually when we examined it, staff and volunteers didn't necessarily feel confident in knowing enough about the Charter Mark. So we set up processes so that staff would come along to charter review groups and find a little bit more about the process. So in that way it was also really helpful. Again, we didn't really know that before the beginning of the process.

**Hugh:** I think it's probably fair to say that we found the framework quite straightforward and quite easy to use. When we approached it, we recognised that it could be used as a whole process or it could be used as a bit of a menu which we could pick and choose the areas that we were really interested in focusing on. That's where the benefit for us came from, was where we were able to say actually that's an area that we really are interested in looking at, and Cara and her team were able to look partnerships in particular. I think that the way that the tool is constructed allows you to do that, and it also means that, for an organisation, you can use it to look at your organisation's impact on a more strategic level. Actually, it's really useful working with your staff and just looking at very specific projects and specific pieces of work that you're trying to achieve particular focused impact through as well.

**Cara:** For me, just simply having a framework where you can examine your work in a little bit more detail is really helpful. The challenge questions are really helpful and they are slightly more tailored to third sector, which I found useful because you weren't trying to squeeze your work into certain words and think about is that quite the right fit for us? So, I found that a bit more fitted to our work anyway.

**Hugh:** Absolutely.

Cara: For me, people should get involved in using this tool because it allows you to think about how your organisation can improve. It gives you quite simple questions that you can follow and it can also bring your team together to examine challenges that you never really thought about before.

**Hugh:** I think that the idea of doing it as a whole organisation means that you can take a systematic approach, and the tool gives you that opportunity to work through the whole of your organisation, if you're a smaller organisation, or to break it down into manageable chunks if you're a larger organisation. So that flexibility that's built into the tool is particularly useful. **[ends]**