

Monitoring and Evaluation

Key Terms:

- **Monitoring:** Regularly collecting and recording information that will help you answer questions on the progress of your project.
- **Evaluation:** Using monitoring and other information to measure the effectiveness of your project, and the benefits it brings. Can allow you to make changes where needed.
- **Inputs:** The resources you put into your project to deliver its outputs. Inputs include: time, money and premises.
- **Outputs:** The services and facilities you deliver. Outputs include: training courses, support sessions and publications.
- **Outcomes or impact:** All the changes and effects that happen because of your activities, e.g. increased confidence levels, or skills gained.

What Groups tell us:

- “We’re working hard, but are we doing any good?”
- “Counting heads won’t look very impressive because we only work with small numbers of people. We need to show the difference we’re making to people’s lives.”
- “We need a way to check how well we’re doing which doesn’t take up more time than the work itself.”

What Funders tell us:

- “We need to know our grants will make a long-term difference.”
- “We have to account for the money ourselves.”
- “Regular monitoring helps us check if everything is going as planned. If it isn’t, we can decide with the group what to do about it.”

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→ Are you ready for Funding?

- Many funders are open-minded about how you monitor and evaluate your project. This means you can decide how to measure the success of your project, and decide what information you want to collect and how. For example, if you run a training project, one simple monitoring method is a daily register or signing-in sheet.
- Other funders have their own systems, and some can be very complex. Find out about this before you apply for the funding. You may need to include the costs of setting up monitoring systems and someone to operate them in your project budget.
- Regularly check your budget to monitor the money you are spending on the project. If your spending doesn't match the budget, why is this? Do you need to change the project, or the budget? If you want to move money from one part of the project to another, or vary the project in any way, you must get the funder's permission first.
- Evaluation allows you to gather information that tells you about the effectiveness of your project, and the benefits it brings. Evaluation information can often be gathered through asking your service users for feedback during the time of the project. If you want to find out the longer term impact of your work, you could also 'track' how people progress after the project has finished. To gain a really independent view of the success of your project, you may want to build the cost of external evaluation into your project budget. There are many methods for gathering evaluation information, and it is important to make sure the methods you use are appropriate and simple.
- Don't forget to check:
 - How and when do your funders want you to report to them?
 - Who needs to know what, and when?
 - Will your system deliver this?