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Safer Communities Programme

Principle 4: Better Outcomes for Communities

Evaluation: A guide to basic evaluation



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1. Introduction

This basic evaluation guide is part of a series of guides that will be published as part of the **Safer Communities Programme**. The model is not prescriptive in any way and is intended to provide a meaningful framework for national guidance and support.

Safer Communities Programme



Evaluation emerged as a key priority throughout the consultation exercises. There is a clear desire from across the public and voluntary sectors to improve the quality of evaluation generally. The emphasis on demonstrating success through an outcomes approach has led organisations and partnerships to critically look at whether they have the skills, knowledge and capacity to undertake high quality evaluation.

This guidance is intended to form part of a broader community safety evaluation framework to establish a culture where evaluation is routinely used and valued in the community safety sector.

This will be a culture where:

- Everyone understands the benefits of evaluation
- Everyone understands what good and appropriate evaluation is
- A high number of community safety programmes, projects and processes are routinely evaluated; and
- Evaluation is good quality and well presented

The development of the framework will enable:

- Quantification of the impact of programmes, projects and processes against outcomes
- Increased understanding about what works and what doesn't to tackle Safer and Stronger issues
- Learning to support continuous improvement to develop better programmes, projects and processes and to inform policy making

2. Aims

This guide is not intended to be an exhaustive guide to evaluation. It seeks to set out the basics and provide signposts to further information.

The guidance is relevant to everyone who engages in the work of community safety, particularly those who have a responsibility for:

- Evaluating a single partnership activity, project or initiative
- Evaluating partnership programmes (a range of activities, projects and initiatives)
- Evaluating the impact of a partnership

3. The difference between monitoring and evaluation

Both monitoring and evaluation are important. But they are different – as shown in the table below:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Monitoring | <p>Monitoring is used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a project or organisation. It is based on targets set and activities scheduled during the planning phases of work. It largely focuses on quantifiable outputs and whether your project or activity is functioning as intended. If monitoring is done properly it should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the work on track• Let your management know if things are going wrong• Let you know if your resources are sufficient and being well used• Identify if your capacity is appropriate• Tell you whether you are doing what you planned to do• Provide a useful base for evaluation |
| Evaluation | <p>Evaluation looks beyond what you are doing (for example – how many events were run, how many people gained full-time employment, how much was invested in community activity) to assess what the actual impact of these activities has been against the agreed strategic plans. It provides the answer to the “So what?” question by reviewing whether what you have actually produced has accomplished the outcomes that you originally set out to achieve. Evaluation can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formative – takes place during the life of a project or organisation, with the intention of improving the strategy or way of functioning.• Summative – draws learning from a completed project or an organisation that is reaching the end of its current activities or is no longer functioning. <p>Using a medical analogy, these two approaches can be described as the difference between a check-up and a post-mortem. One enables you to make changes to live more healthily, the other identifies cause of death and any learning that can be used to help others live longer.</p> |

4. What is evaluation?

Put simply evaluation is a process to assess whether or not a project, a programme or an organisation is achieving or has achieved its intended outcomes.

In basic terms an evaluation seeks to address the following questions:

- What is trying to be achieved?
- How is this being achieved?
- What outputs result from this process?
- What effects do these outputs have?
- What worked well and what didn't work well?
- What would you change in future as a result?
- What implications does this have for other programmes and/or activities?

5. Why evaluate?

There are lots of reasons for undertaking evaluation – including:

- To inform decision making on where resources should be deployed
- To assess cost-effectiveness and value for money
- To assess outcomes achieved
- To build knowledge and learn (for us and others)
- To understand why a programme or activity did or didn't work
- To improve a programme or activity
- To assess whether a community's needs were met
- To improve partnership working
- To access external funding

6. How to undertake evaluation?

6.1 The ten principles of good evaluation

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Promote a culture of evaluation throughout the partnership at all levels |
| 2 | Ensure staff have appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake effective evaluation |
| 3 | Select method, depth and timing of evaluation according to what you need to know |
| 4 | Ensure communication is well established among the partners throughout the process |
| 5 | A commitment to information sharing needs to be made early on by all partners and baseline information should be agreed and collected from the start of the process |
| 6 | Agree roles and responsibilities with agreed timescales for all relevant partners |
| 7 | Agree a reporting mechanism within the partnership and within each partner organisation |
| 8 | The evaluation process should be impartial and as inclusive as possible |
| 9 | To be useful, evaluations must be used to inform policy making and to allocate resources |
| 10 | Share achievements and learn from mistakes |

6.2 Timing of evaluation

Data to examine the impact should ideally be considered and collected from the beginning of any programme or activity. It can be problematic to gain access to data retrospectively.

The timing of any evaluation is largely dependent on local circumstances and needs. It may be useful to consider the following questions when deciding the best time for evaluation:

| Question | Potential answers |
|--|---|
| Why are you carrying out the evaluation? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn lessons for future reference • Feedback into an ongoing project in 'real time' • Justify spending • Project manage the initiative |
| What you will do with the results? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify how an existing project is being delivered • Inform the development of future projects. • Update project sponsors or funders. • Forward it to the Community Safety Unit for inclusion in the national knowledge database • Share the findings with other practitioners and academics |

6.3 Types of evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation can comprise a number of different elements, such as needs assessment, self assessment, peer assessment, cost/benefit analysis, formative (during), summative (after), impact, process and outcome. The type of evaluation you undertake to improve your project depends on what you want to learn about the programme and those elements which are relevant can be set out in a form of terms of reference at the beginning. From there, processes can be put in place to capture relevant information as it is required. The type of evaluation is not as important as the decisions which will allow you to accurately collect and understand the information. This will add value to your assessment of the success of any undertaking.

| Type | Example |
|---|---|
| Needs Assessment | A structured process to determine typically the needs of individuals or target groups. It can be used to identify gaps in service or the re-design of a service. |
| Self Assessment or Internal Evaluation | Self assessments allow partnerships and organisations to judge how they are performing. Undergoing a self-assessment is a recognised method of identifying strengths and areas for improvement. It usually consists of a set of questions covering leadership, governance, accountability, performance management, resources and processes. |
| Peer Review or External Evaluation | Peer review is an important element of self-improvement. It usually involves a peer or team of peers acting as critical friends. This tends to be undertaken at organisational or service level. An external evaluation may involve the appointment of an independent body or consultant. Both peer review and external evaluation ensure an unbiased perspective. |
| Cost/Benefit Analysis | An evaluation of the costs which would be incurred by some action versus the overall benefits to society of the proposed action. This provides a good understanding of the value for money of different activities. |
| Formative | This evaluation takes place during the project to guide future development. |
| Summative | This evaluation takes place after completion of a project to appraise its success. |
| Impact or Outcome | This evaluation is concerned with demonstrating whether there was a credible causation between the activity and the impact. |
| Process | Process evaluation examines the procedures and tasks involved in implementing a programme or strategy. This type of evaluation can also look at administrative and organisational aspects. An example of this in a community safety context would be the evaluation of problem solving or joint tasking and co-ordinating. |
| Qualitative | Qualitative evaluation generates rich, non-measurable data and deals with people's experience, attitude and behaviour. |
| Quantitative | Quantitative evaluation generates numerical data and deals with numerical measurements. |
| Participatory Evaluation | An evaluation in which representatives of all those with an interest are directly involved in planning and delivering the evaluation. For example an evaluation of a diversionary project for young people might involve the young people, youth workers, community safety teams, Police and funders. It can be a useful method of getting 'ownership' of the evaluation and of building skills and capacity. |



6.4 Methods of evaluation

The overall goal in selecting appropriate evaluation method(s) is to get the most useful information to key decision makers in the most cost-effective and realistic way.

The following table provides an overview of the main methods used for collecting information before, during and after a programme of work.

| Method | Overall Purpose | Advantages | Challenges |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Questionnaires, surveys, checklists | When you need to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non threatening way | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-can be anonymous-inexpensive to administer-easy to compare and analyse-administer to many people-can get lots of data-many sample questionnaires already exist | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-might not get careful feedback-wording can bias client's responses-are impersonal-in surveys, may need sampling expert- doesn't get full story |
| Interviews | When you want to fully understand someone's views or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-get full range and depth of information-develops relationship with customer/partner-can be flexible | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-can take time-can be hard to analyse and compare-can be costly-interviewer can bias customer/partner responses |
| Documentation review | When you want an impression of how a programme operates without interrupting the programme; could consist of review of applications, finances, reports, memos, agendas and minutes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-get comprehensive and historical information-doesn't interrupt programme-information already exists-few biases about information | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-can take time-info may be incomplete-need to be quite clear about what you're looking for-not a flexible means to get the data; data restricted to what already exists |
| Observation | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-can be difficult to interpret seen behaviours-can be complex to categorize observations-can influence behaviours of programme participants-can be expensive |

| Method | Overall Purpose | Advantages | Challenges |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Focus Groups | Explore a topic in-depth through group discussion for example about reactions to an experience or understanding common complaints | -quickly and reliably get common experiences -can be efficient way to get a good range and depth of information in a short time - can convey key information about programmes | -can be hard to analyse responses -need a good facilitator for safety and closure -difficult to get people together |
| Case Studies | To fully understand or depict a customer's experiences in a programme, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases | -fully depicts customer's experience in programme input, process and results -powerful means to portray programme to outsiders | -usually quite time consuming to collect, organise and describe -represents depth of information, rather than breadth |

6.5 Levels of evaluation

Evaluation can take place at different levels, including:

Strategy level evaluation: This tends to take place at a fairly high level and will involve the evaluation of many projects and programmes. For example, an evaluation of community safety strategies would fall into this category. The purpose of this level of evaluation is often to understand the impact of the strategy as a whole and to identify which programmes and projects were more successful than others.

Service level evaluation: The evaluation of service provision tends to focus on methods that involve the service users. Its main purpose is to find out whether the service is providing value for money and meeting the needs of the service users or the wider community.

Programme level evaluation: A programme is a group or set of projects or initiatives which have a common theme. An example is a violence reduction initiative which involved several projects in several towns and communities designed to tackle violence from different perspectives. The purpose of this level of evaluation is often to understand the impact of the programme as a whole and to identify which components were more successful than others. The focus of this level is often on multiple locations.

Project level evaluation: This is the basic level of evaluation. A project or initiative is a set of related tasks that have a specific objective. It normally has a clearly defined scope and looks at a single problem. For example, work to reduce concerns regarding public safety in a park by providing better lighting, cutting back hedges, the presence of a warden and so on. The purpose of this level of evaluation is to measure whether the project has had an impact on the problem. The focus of this level is often on one location.

Source – Adapted from Passport to Evaluation v2.0, Home Office, 2009

6.6 Depth of evaluation

There are a number of features to distinguish between short term and long term evaluations:

| | Features of short term evaluator | Features of long term evaluator |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Resources | Low input (time or staff) | High input (time and staff) |
| Audience | Primarily funding groups and stakeholders | Primarily research and key stakeholders in community safety sector |
| Evaluation type | Impact – snapshot of success | Process – (process monitoring and review) and Impact |
| Methodology | Predominantly quantitative (numerical) | Mixture of quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (attitudes and opinions) |
| Research question | Is it working/did it work? | Is it working/did it work? Why/how did it work/is it working? |
| Intervention complexity | Often simple, single intervention – operational level | Often complex, multiple interventions – programme level |

Source – Adapted from Passport to Evaluation v2.0, Home Office, 2009

6.7 Measuring impact

Clear targets should be set at the project planning stage and are a pre-requisite for any form of evaluation. The acronym SMART is widely used to assist in the target setting process:

- **Specific** – all targets should have specific outcomes, for example to reduce violent crime.
- **Measurable** – the outcome should be capable of being measured, for example to reduce recorded violent crime by ten per cent.
- **Achievable** – reaching the target can be challenging but can be done within the timescales, with the resources and skills available.
- **Realistic** – targets should not be set too high and should be physically possible to achieve for example a 50% reduction in all violent crime by next week.
- **Timebound** – a timescale should be set for when the target is to be achieved by; for example to reduce recorded violent crime by ten per cent in the next 12 months.

There are a number of challenges to be aware of when setting targets. These include:

- Establishing conflicting targets (this can happen in partnership projects where the priorities of one partner conflict with those of another)
- Understanding the direction of the target (for example, your activity may initially increase violent crime because more victims are willing to report it)
- Influencing perception based targets (for example, the local media may increase the fear of crime)

7. Organisational and partnership models

There are lots of existing evaluation models that can be applied to assess whether an organisation or partnership is achieving its purpose, vision, aims and outcomes.

Some organisations or partnerships may use a range of 'off the shelf' models, while others may have developed their own models. The most frequently used models that involve evaluation (predominantly self-evaluation) are presented in the table below:

| Model | Type | Further Information |
|--|---|--|
| EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model | Single agency – public, private and voluntary sectors worldwide | EFQM Excellence Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a structure for the organisation's management system • Can be used as part of a self-assessment • Provides a framework for comparison with other organisations • Helps to identify areas for Improvement www.efqm.org |
| Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) | Single agency – public sector organisations in Scotland | PSIF is a self-assessment tool, which encourages organisations to conduct a systematic and comprehensive review of their own activities and results. It is based on the EFQM Excellence Model and incorporates the use of the Investors in People standard, Customer Service Excellence and Best Value principles. In essence, PSIF is a streamlined approach to organisational improvement for the public sector. www.improvementservice.org.uk/public-service-improvement-framework-psif |
| Best Value 2 | Single agency – public sector organisations, with an emphasis on how they work in partnership | Best Value provides a common framework for continuous improvement in public services in Scotland. The principles underpinning BV2 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on outcomes as well as corporate performance management processes. • An emphasis on the effectiveness of partnership working. Improved coverage of service performance and the use of resources. • A proportionate and risk-based approach, founded on self-assessment. • Clear audit reporting and transparency of audit process. • Support for improvement and the sharing of good practice. www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/BV2 |
| Child Protection Quality Improvement Framework | Child Protection Committees in Scotland (in essence a partnership) | 'How good are we now? How well do we protect children and meet their needs? How good can we be?' published by HMIE in 2009 sets out the framework to support staff working in child protection services to carry out self-evaluation. www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hwdwpcamtn.pdf |

| Model | Type | Further Information |
|---|---|--|
| How Good is Our Community Learning and Development 2 (HMIE) | Community Learning and Development (CLD) | The guide provides a quality framework to support community learning and development practitioners and managers in self-evaluating their work. It is also used by HMIE in conducting CLD inspections. This framework provides a set of standards against which CLD can be comprehensively evaluated. The guide concentrates on evaluating the impacts of CLD practice on individual learners and communities. The principles and practices advocated are relevant for evaluation of face-to-face practice, and also operational and strategic management. The general principles and practices may be used to underpin self-evaluation in other contexts, using alternative quality frameworks and evaluation tools. www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgio2cld.pdf |
| National Intelligence Model | Police forces across the UK Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England & Wales | The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is an intelligence led Business Model that ensures that information is fully researched, developed and analysed to provide intelligence that senior managers can use to provide strategic direction, make tactical resourcing decisions about operational policing and manage risk. police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/operational-policing/nim-introduction |
| Self assessment checklist for partners | Partnership – Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships in Scotland | The self assessment checklist (Appendix 4) sets out some of the high-level practical issues around drug and alcohol services raised in the Audit Scotland report 'Drugs and alcohol services in Scotland' published in 2009. www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/all_national.php?year=2008 |
| Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships, implementation Checklist | Partnership – Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England & Wales | The checklist provides a framework for CDRPs to meet their statutory requirements under four broad headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and guide • Assess • Plan for action • Deliver www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions021clua.pdf |
| CDRP (VFM) Self Assessment | Partnership – Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England & Wales | The CDRP Value for Money web-based self-assessment tool enables CDRPs to identify their progress in achieving VFM outcomes. The toolkit is divided into 5 sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing Your Communities • Allocating Resources • Performance Management • Achieving Value for Money • Capacity, Knowledge and Learning cdrp.audit-commission.gov.uk/introduction.aspx |

| Model | Type | Further Information |
|---|---|---|
| Self assessment questions – improving partnership working | Partnership – Local Strategic Partnerships in England & Wales | Published by the Audit Commission in 2009 this publication is part of the series of publications under ‘Working better together? Managing local strategic partnerships’. www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/workingbettertogether/Pages/workingbettertogether.aspx |
| Partnership Assessment Tool | Partnerships – all partnerships delivering public services | This publication takes you through every stage of the assessment process. The tool is based on six principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle 1 – recognise and accept the need for partnership • Principle 2 – develop clarity and realism of purpose • Principle 3 – ensure commitment and ownership • Principle 4 – develop and maintain trust • Principle 5 – create clear and robust partnership arrangements • Principle 6 – monitor, measure and learn (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003) www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/assessingstrategicpartnership |
| Learning, Evaluation and Planning (LEAP) | Partnership Community | There are a number of versions of the LEAP framework, namely Greenspace, Volunteering, Community Learning and Development and Health. The LEAP framework is a toolkit designed to support a partnership approach to achieving change and improvement in the quality of community life. leap.scdc.org.uk |

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---|
| Problem Solving | Partnership Community | <p>The process of evaluation is crucial within a problem solving approach. There are a number of problem solving models including:</p> <p>SARA (stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) has become the most recognised problem solving model to identify and address crime reduction and community safety problems. www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/sara.htm</p> <p>The 5 I's model was developed by Paul Ekblom in the Home Office Research Unit and rather than just focusing on problem solving it states that the model relates to the preventive process. The 5 I's in the model stand for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence • Intervention • Implementation • Involvement • Impact. <p>www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/5isintro.htm</p> <p>The PROCTOR model is a refinement of the SARA model and appears in the Home Office publication Not Rocket Science? This stands for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROblem • Cause • Tactic (or treatment) • Output • Result <p>www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/proctor.htm</p> <p>The Problem Analysis Triangle (also known as crime triangle) derived from routine activity theory involves separating the elements of the problem into offender, victim and location. If you remove one of these aspects the triangle will collapse, and the problem will probably disappear or reduce. www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/rat.htm</p> <p>ID PARTNERS – a more recent approach which builds on SARA stands for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the demand – Where/who is it from? • Drivers – What do people want and why? • Problem – Define it. • Aim – What do you want to achieve? • Research and analysis – What is happening and why? • Think creatively – What are your options? • Negotiate and initiate responses – How? When? • Evaluate – Did you meet your aims? • Review – Did the methods you used work? • Success – Celebrate it and learn from it. <p>www.sixthsensetraining.co.uk</p> <p>For further information about evaluation and problem solving refer to Passport to Evaluation v2.0, Home Office, 2009: www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/passport_to_evaluation.htm</p> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---|

Community Safety Partnerships may wish to consider these models to see which best suit their local circumstances and needs.

8. Evaluating partnership working

The Safer Communities Effective Partnership Model has the ability to provide an evaluation framework for Community Safety Partnerships. This could be used alongside a number of complementary models (e.g. Best Value 2, National Intelligence Model and problem solving).

The table below promotes a set of key criteria under each partnership dynamic. This is intended to provide a common framework for the 32 local partnership arrangements. Through the identification of strengths and weaknesses it is hoped that partnerships will better understand their own support needs.

| Partnership Dynamic | Key Criteria |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (1) Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leaders of the partnership clearly articulate the shared vision and sense of purpose • There is involvement and commitment of all partners • There is evidence of the influence of the partnership on all partners • There is political/board level leadership and involvement • There is officer leadership and involvement • There is community leadership and involvement |
| (2) Governance and Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear shared vision and purpose • There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities • There are sound accountability arrangements • The partnership has adopted an effective model of partnership working • Partnership structures are coherent and rational and constantly reflect the partnership's new and emerging priorities • Decisions are informed, transparent and subject to public scrutiny • The capacity and capability of the people involved in the partnership are continuously developed • There is a joint communications strategy for internal and external communication |
| (3) Evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities and actions are evidence-based and focus on identified need • There is a shared approach to risk management • Appropriate information is collected, shared and acted upon under robust information sharing protocols • The analytical capacity of the partnership is sufficient to undertake meaningful strategic and operational analysis • A form of risk and threat assessment is carried out • Barriers have been addressed in terms of information quality, accuracy, availability and governance • The partnership encourages a problem solving approach • There is evidence of joint resource allocation or pooling of budgets (human and financial) |

| Partnership Dynamic | Key Criteria |
|------------------------------|--|
| (4) Outcomes for Communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership's vision is translated into priorities and actions • The partnership's plans influence partner organisation's plans and vice versa • The partnership has set out clear measures which allow progress to be tracked • Performance information is used to proactively manage and improve partnership performance • There is effective reporting of partnership performance to stakeholders • The partnership has delivered its intended outcomes • Evaluation is embedded across partnership's activity to maximise the use of resources • The impact of partnership working is evaluated • The partnership is able to identify the requirements of an effective partnership through self-assessment or third-party assessment • The partnership is committed to community engagement • The partnership understands and reflects communities' needs and aspirations • The partnership builds (community) capacity and involves communities • Joint consultations across partner organisations are undertaken • The partnership promotes new ways of addressing long term problems |

9. Links to further information

Evaluation Support Scotland
Evaluation Pathway

www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/evaluation/index.asp

Home Office

Passport to Evaluation 2.0

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/learningzone/pasport_to_evaluation.htm

The Magenta Book: Guidance notes for policy evaluation and analysis

www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/magenta_book/index.asp

UK Evaluation Society

www.evaluation.org.uk



Contact us

Visit www.scotland.gov.uk/communitysafety and follow the link to “Information for practioners” for access to the latest community safety information, tools and guidance.

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