Monitoring and Evaluation

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Monitoring and Evaluation is an important aspect of the delivery of any project or service. Funders often ask you to monitor and evaluate your project but even if your project isn't funded it is important to continue monitoring and evaluating to ensure you are meeting the needs of your beneficiaries. Monitoring and evaluation should be a key part of your project not something that you try to do at the end.

Monitoring and evaluating projects and services helps organisations to show that they have achieved what they set out to do. Monitoring and evaluation can also help to identify changes that need to be made in order to achieve the results the project or services is aiming for.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a process of recording what is happening with your project or service. Remember to design monitoring into your project from the start.

For example:
- Counting the number of people who take part in your project
- Recording expenditure on the project
- Asking people who use your service what they think of it
- Recording any positive changes as a result of your project

When you collect this information will depend on your project or funders requirements, some monitoring will be carried out on a regular basis and others more infrequently.

The information that is collected through monitoring is the starting point for evaluation. There's no point collecting information if you then don't do anything with it.

Evaluation

Evaluation is about making a judgement on how your project or service is performing. The information collected during monitoring, along with other information, will inform the evaluation.

For example:
- The number of people that take part in your project is falling or increasing
- Expenditure on the project is increasing.
- Users of your services are satisfied.
- You need to change your delivery to meet new needs

As part of the evaluation you will need to make a judgement as to why the project is performing in the way that it is.

For example:
- The number of people using the project is falling because another organisation is offering a better service.
- Expenditure is increasing because insurance costs have risen.
- The project offers a good service for users.

Evaluations will need to use two sorts of data:

Quantitative data is based on information about your project that you can count or measure (e.g. numbers of people using your services).

Qualitative information is based on the quality of your project, it is often best collected through interviews, simple questionnaires or group discussions.

Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs focus on the **quantitative** measures for example focusing on the number of people benefitting, number of events or number of sessions. However, many funders are now using an **outcomes** approach to funding which focuses on the **wider benefit** funding can bring and the changes that have taken place.

Top Tips
- Be clear about what you need to monitor from the start of your project
  Keep it simple, focus on the important aspects of your project rather than trying to monitor everything.
- Make sure everyone knows what needs to be measured and when.
- Build your monitoring into your everyday practices so it doesn't become a burden.
- Ask other organisations about their monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Check what is required from your funders

CVA Blyth Valley can help and advise on appropriate monitoring and evaluation practices for your projects.

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