

How was it for you? Learning events instead of written reports

The Health and Social Care ALLIANCE (the ALLIANCE) wanted to try out a new way of working with projects to find out about impact and learning. Instead of requiring full written reports they brought funded projects together in 3 learning events throughout 2019, facilitated by ESS. Each event involved a pre-questionnaire and lots of discussion. ESS wrote and shared a report after each.

We asked funder and funded to tell us about their experiences of trying out this way of "reporting". Some common themes emerged.

<p>Lara Murray Fund Manager</p>	 <p>ALLIANCE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ALLIANCE SCOTLAND people at the centre</p>	<p>Sum up your reactions to this way of working in five words...</p>	 <p>volunteer edinburgh</p>	<p>Sarah Cleary Health and Employability Service Manager</p>
<p>Challenged Earnest Inquisitive Motivated Receptive</p>		<p>Inspiring Encouraging Permissive Enabling Strengthening</p>		

Time commitment

We acknowledged that funding allocated for periods of 12-18 months should have a proportionate reporting requirement.

We are maintaining the momentum up until the end of funding rather than winding things down in readiness for reporting so I would say the funder has got more for their pound. Days out were a big commitment but all in all we have spent a bigger proportion of our time on delivery rather than number counting.

Learning

Through discussions at each of the three events and the three reports prepared by Evaluation Support Scotland, we have gathered insightful evidence from the third sector on the implementation of health and social care integration. We have also gathered valuable input from these projects on their key learning about delivering a self-management project.

I learnt so much from hearing from other participants and loved being part of a group that were all doing such different things but in essence trying to help people in similar situations in such different ways.

I would say we have learnt more and achieved more.

Sharing

This learning can inform our development work on health and social care integration. Views gathered from this round of funded projects will directly inform the design of the next round of the fund.

It felt supportive rather than competitive. We have been freer to take time to share the learning with others. Less precious about holding onto the learning ourselves.

Understanding each other

What has struck me has been the conversations this has opened between myself and representatives from funded projects around what we are hoping to gain from their reports/learning. It has felt like we have had meaningful conversations about what we do with project reports, why we ask for reports and the fund/ALLIANCE priorities for work.

So good to be reassured that it was about what worked best for the individuals we were working with and not the numbers. About the learning and what worked for the person receiving the service not the funder giving the money.

Meaning

I hope that this has made the reporting process feel more meaningful and not merely a formality of the funding process.

The learning sessions helped to maintain focus for me and remind me why we were doing this, what was most important and who was most important. I was encouraged to dig deeper and really think about why we were doing the buddying and be positively critical of how we established and delivered the project.

Confidence to experiment

Without trying the refreshed approach to reporting and monitoring last year, we would not have the confidence and faith to offer more flexibility and creativity to the learning funded projects can produce. This has been an enjoyable aspect of this way of working, feeling unfettered to explore creative, relevant and useful ways for funded projects to gather and share what they have learned.

Once you can put aside the horrible feeling of "you haven't just forgotten to hand in your homework" the learning sessions were great.

We have been able to experiment with different models/ideas, take calculated risks and so find the best fit for us, the buddies, and the volunteers.