



We're all on the same page now!

This case study is about

how a range of evaluation support helped Music 4 U get to grips with evaluation

Read it if you want to learn about the benefit of taking up different types of evaluation support

It will show you that working together with colleagues can improve individual evaluation skills and knowledge whilst improving the organisation's evaluation processes

Introduction

Music 4 U provides performing arts opportunities to participants from varying backgrounds, including those affected by physical and learning disabilities, from areas of social and financial deprivation and who are on the autistic spectrum.

The organisation was referred to Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) in November 2018 for free support through our learning support contract with The National Lottery Community Fund. The Funding Officer told us the organisation could benefit from *"support in learning tools and techniques to help them evaluate the impact of their work"*.

Music 4 U said they wanted to learn *"How to evaluate how well our project is people-led, strengths-based and connected; when, how and who will collect the information, and where it will be stored as well as how*

to ensure how our learning directly helps the project and ensure that any changes needed are implemented positively ensuring that the difference our projects make remains or is enhanced. In addition, we want to know how to tell our story to funders and stakeholders".

What we did

- Two members of staff from Music 4 U (Debbie and Karen) attended the 3 workshops in ESS's *Let's Evaluate!* programme.
- Karen also had a tailored support session with an ESS staff member.
- Karen attended ESS's webinar 'Stats and Stories'.

The difference made

- Following the workshops Karen and Debbie reported improvements to their understanding and knowledge of how to:
 - ✓ Write outcomes and indicators
 - ✓ Use different methods and tools to collect evidence of outcomes
 - ✓ Analyse and report on outcomes achieved
- Previously Music 4 U's evaluation plans had been categorised by funder but after support they devised an **evaluation plan** that was useful for them and not just for satisfying funder requirements.
- Karen said that the Stats and Stories webinar *"was a great way to not only have a bit of a refresher but great to hear from people in similar situations and learn from each other. Being able to do this with no travel time i.e. from the comfort of my own office is really invaluable"*.



"Concise but not overwhelming. Informative but not mind boggling. Welcoming with assurance of support if needed" Debbie, about *Getting Started*

Learning

We learned that there can be real benefit in having more than one person from an organisation attend the workshops. Karen told ESS that “Debbie needed to be there as she’s involved in the operations side of the charity but also the creative side – this type of learning/way of thinking doesn’t come naturally to Debbie (she’s the first one to say that 😊) but she needed to learn and understand it as she’s the person on the ‘shop floor’ i.e. she’s in charge of the staff who are delivering the outcomes and gathering the information. Whereas I am involved ‘behind the scenes’, gathering and putting all the evaluation material into formats and reports that we can give to our board and funders. 100% needed both of us there in these very different roles. One complements the other”.

We also learned that there is benefit in a combination of types of evaluation support. In this case, Music 4 U were able to make a good start on their evaluation plan after attending the **workshops** and then use the **tailored support session** to improve and finalise it. Karen said that taking part in the **webinar** “just keeps it all fresh and current”.

Looking to the future

ESS asked Music 4 U how they are developing as a result of what they learned. Karen said:

“Our team (direct delivery staff) has such a better understanding of our outcomes, and what and why we need the information from them. It’s no longer just an exercise, something that they *have* to do – they now have the full picture as we were able to explain it all so much easier and have a full procedure in place (that made sense to them).”

“When we suggested to the team (7 people including 1 volunteer) that we would like to expand and offer accredited certificates to our young people (to do so we would need to incorporate the Trinity Arts Awards Evaluation within our existing evaluation procedures) it was welcomed without resistance.

Resistance would have been there before, a bit of ‘fear of the unknown’, because they wouldn’t have had such an understanding of outcomes and evaluation. BUT they did through our training with you, so we were able to expand into delivering accredited courses to ALL our children and youth from age 5 to 25 years of age.”

“Our team now talks about outcomes and evaluation as part of our everyday delivery. We are all on the same page and working towards the same goal. Honestly, it’s priceless what we learned!”

Contact details

If you want ESS’s support, please contact [Evaluation Support Scotland](#)

For further information about tailored support please click [here](#)

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