

Evaluation Support Scotland working in partnership with the ALLIANCE

Since the beginning of the Self Management Fund, the ALLIANCE has partnered with Evaluation Support Scotland to provide workshops and support to funded projects. During the first three rounds of the IMPACT Fund, Martha Lester-Cribb has delivered packages of four sessions to 66 projects.

"We share an ethos with the ALLIANCE, not only about an honest, positive, flexible and proportionate approach to evaluation and why it's important, but also in the way we work."

For Martha evaluation can keep us all motivated by helping find out if we are making the difference we want to make. The ALLIANCE partnered with ESS to help projects understand the power of evaluation, to share what they are doing with those involved and to dispel myths around reporting and monitoring.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel – the ALLIANCE has trusted me as the expert to bring the self management projects together to share and learn."

Martha has found that by working together, projects have discovered that they have the confidence to be innovative and find new ways of working, new ways of demonstrating the difference they've made. Initially projects were fearful of 'getting it right' for the funder, but over time felt more able to understand that the ALLIANCE was interested in knowing their ideas about reporting too.

"Funders are human beings too and don't want to be reading a 30 page report of stats. and graphs as much as projects don't want to write that!"



Martha has particularly enjoyed the mutually trusting relationship that the partnership with the ALLIANCE has been based upon, with a shared understanding of 'what it's all about'. This has allowed issues to be ironed out as they have arisen, and also for challenges to be looked at in terms of opportunities for future learning and development.

The sessions produced much more than we expected, they were so productive and the projects so enthusiastic – it's been a lovely area to work in, building on people's passions on a very real level."

There is potential to do so much more together to support projects, now and in the future, not only to demonstrate their impact but also to design appropriate and inclusive tools to do so, and to share good practice. Bringing people together, getting different people involved and showcasing different approaches is what the ALLIANCE and ESS are both about, and we plan to keep building on this relationship.

ESS thanks the ALLIANCE for giving permission to use this case study which originally featured in ['Building on the IMPACT – An interim report of the Self Management IMPACT Fund 2013 – 2015'](#)