

Developing a framework for external evaluation

This case study is about *how Scottish Mentoring Network used 'a resource for understanding intermediaries' impact' to evaluate their organisation*

Read it if you are an intermediary or a funder of an intermediary

Background



In February 2018, ESS launched a pack '[A resource for understanding Intermediaries Impact'](#).

Iain Forbes (former CEO of Scottish Mentoring Network) was involved in the working group that developed the resource. When the organisation commissioned Hall Aitken to undertake an external evaluation of their work, Iain suggested that they use the 6 intermediary functions to assess their work against.

What we did

Hall Aitken mapped activity against the intermediary functions (outlined in section 4) and then assessed the extent to which members needs were being met under those headings.



They then considered their impact against strategic objectives around

- raising the profile and awareness of the value of mentoring
- increasing the scale of mentoring in Scotland
- improving the quality of mentoring across Scotland

What we found

From this process we identified the strengths and weaknesses of the current model and possible future action. Amongst other things the evaluation recognised:

- the quality award was a strong asset to build upon
- that SMN currently has limited capacity to help in collecting evidence of impact (building intelligence and evaluation) but could work through its newly formed impact forum to do more.
- should focus its influencing role around raising the profile of mentoring amongst different government departments
- develop new ways of networking and delivering training

The difference the resource made to us

It's helpful to recognise that with limited resources you cannot fulfil all intermediary roles equally. You need to focus on those things that are important to members. In part that depends on who else is supporting them.

We are clear that our focus is on promoting and developing good practice, through creating learning and networking opportunities, the quality award and though providing information and support to mentoring projects and those might run them.

We also have a role to play in building the profile of mentoring and how it can contribute to many areas of policy and work. We need to make a broad range of people aware that we can offer advice on when it is appropriate to use mentoring, what schemes already exist, what works and what resource are required to set up an effective project.

The logo for the Scottish Mentoring Network. It features the word 'scottish' in a lowercase, serif font. Below it, the word 'mentoring' is written in a similar font, with a blue hand icon replacing the letter 'o'. Below 'mentoring' is the word 'network' in a lowercase, serif font, with a yellow hand icon replacing the letter 'o'.

[Scottish Mentoring Network](#) is a membership organisation for third sector organisations providing mentoring. We provide training, project development support, opportunities to network, quality and recognition awards. We have around 200 member projects (some within the same organisation), of whom around 30 have achieved the quality award.

Contact details

If you want ESS's support please contact Evaluation Support Scotland by email:

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or phone 0131 243 2770

Please see our website for '[A resource for understanding Intermediaries Impact](#)' and lots more guides, tools and resources

<http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/>

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