

Measuring What Matters Case Study: Neighbourhood Networks

Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) and Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) brought together practitioners from across the sector to develop **Measuring What Matters** - a toolkit to help those working in the field to have a better understanding about their outcomes and how to measure what matters in their work to prevent unintentional harm. This case study shows what **Neighbourhood Networks** learnt when they tested out the toolkit.

This case study was created through the [Measuring What Matters programme](#), however, it illustrates broader learning points about evaluating digital activities. This approach was trialled during the Covid-19 pandemic.



About Neighbourhood Networks

Neighbourhood Networks support vulnerable adults many with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health issues to live an active, healthy life, safely, within their own homes and be fully involved within their local communities. Members take part in networks learning essential life skills, becoming more independent whilst spending more time with friends and becoming less reliant on paid support.

During the Covid-19 pandemic Neighbourhood Networks introduced a range of digital activities for their members, such as cooking classes, dance, yoga, photography and creative writing. Neighbourhood Networks Chief Executive Heather shares her experiences:

"We were keen to use the Measuring what Matters programme to help evaluate our digital activities for people with learning disabilities. Our work helps tackle social isolation. Activities such as our cooking classes help support vulnerable adults to be more independent and safer at home."

"We developed our digital activities in response to the pandemic and we were looking for ideas about how we should evaluate the impact."

What we did

We used the framework and the learning session with ESS to develop an **evaluation plan** for our **digital sessions** with **adults** with learning disabilities. Our short-term outcome was to increase social connectedness for our members.

We notice a lot of social interaction and relationship building happening in the digital sessions. We know this is happening, we just needed to find a way to encourage session hosts to record it.

Our successes

We have made a lot of progress with developing new tools which we are currently testing out. We have created a **feedback form** for session hosts which asks them to **record observations and verbal comments** from members.



We also created a **feedback form** for members, which they completed with a worker after the session. This asked them what they gained from the session and what changes they plan to make to their lives. We are now starting to receive member feedback about the digital sessions.

"Since starting the digital activities I have led a healthier lifestyle and have also lost a few pounds."

"The digital activities are a good way of learning new skills and connecting with people."

We tried introducing this at the same time as a new data management system. Maybe our timescales need to be a bit more realistic because we need to bring teams along with us.

Our learning

We are quite early on in the journey but already we feel more **confident** that we have an **evaluation process** in place.

We feel much more focused – we know what we need to measure. Understanding that **we need indicators** has been invaluable.

We learnt that you need to think about **when** to introduce new tools and approaches to evaluation. It takes time to get other people on board, especially when there is a lot of change happening. Make time to bring along the staff team with you.

Our next steps

We hope to **gather stories** from the hosts about how people have connected to one another and the difference it's made to their social relationships. We're getting staff on board now about **collecting the gems**.

We plan to use this approach in **other parts of our service**.

Resources

[Measuring what Matters toolkit](#)

[Evaluating at a distance](#)

Contact details

If you would like ESS's support please contact us at info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk.

If you would like to find out more about SCSN please visit: <https://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org/>

You may copy or use this publication in part or whole for non-commercial reasons with the exception of photographs, but you must credit Evaluation Support Scotland.

May 2021