

Why evaluation matters

At Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS), we are always pleased to meet third sector organisations who are already enthusiastic about evaluation. Many people understand its value but simply don't know how to go about it, and this is often why they approach us for help.

However, we know that, for others, evaluation can be seen as a bit of a chore! It doesn't have to be, and nor does it need to be something you *have* to do just for your funders. What we care most about is that evaluation is beneficial for you and your service users.

At ESS, we believe that evaluation serves many purposes. Sure, it may help you to apply or report to funders, but more importantly than that it can help you to learn about **the difference you make to the people who use your services**. Most people in the third sector agree that *this* (making a difference) is why they get out of bed and come to work every morning – evaluation is how you know whether or not you're making a difference and how you can make an even bigger one. And the good news is that we try to help you do it in a way that is **simple** and **proportionate**.

Evaluation allows you to:



**Celebrate
success**



**Check
you are
delivering the
right activities
in the right
way**



**Share
learning
with
others**



**Find out
what to keep
doing or stop
doing in the
future**

Why evaluation matters

ESS's many years of experience in helping third sector organisations with evaluation has been distilled in to five basic principles:



1. About what matters

- the focus of evaluation is outcomes – what difference you make (or not), how you make that difference and to whom



2. Fits the way you do your work

- methods and recording are as easy as possible for everyone
- evaluation happens as part of delivery



3. Involves the people you support

- the people you support (service users) have the opportunity to feed back and they know what you do with their feedback
- service users are able reflect for themselves on progress and feel included
- ideally service users have a chance to lead on some aspect of evaluation such as setting outcomes, designing methods or analysing data
- your evaluation does no harm



4. Used by you

- to understand the value of your work and to celebrate
- to improve
- to plan what to do next



5. Communicated well to others

- funders, policy makers, and other stakeholders are convinced and able to use your evaluation to take action themselves

Still need some convincing? Head over to the [ESS website](#) where you can find lots of information about evaluation as well as free resources and the booking page for our [Let's Evaluate!](#) training workshops.