



## Case Study

[ESS principles for good evaluation](#)



### What we did

[Smart Play Network](#) (SPN) is the national organisation supporting play services and play providers in Scotland.

ESS provided tailored support shortly after SPN was set up in 2011, and again in 2023 when CEO Lesley Fox felt it was time for an evaluation refresh for her bigger team. ESS ran two sessions with managers, and then the wider team, to review evaluation plans, build staff comfort with evaluation and improve some methods. This was about moving from “good to great”.



### The difference we made

The team gave positive feedback on the sessions and the learning gained. Example quotes:

*“Informal/reflective feel of the day let us all contribute and brought out the best in us.”*

*“I am going to work on my self-reflection more and more sure I am giving as much feedback as I can.”*

We checked in again 5 months later and they had done loads since! They had:

- created a new logic model for the whole organisation
- updated the organisational values
- made changes to how they pull together evaluation for the whole organisation
- updated training questionnaires and issued a members' survey
- created a new evaluation tool for children – Bubbles the teddy bear!

Manager Aimee Hunt said: *“In general, it helped to bring everyone together to reflect on a shared vision and learn from one another. [it] was great value for both the front-line workers and office/admin teams to hear how each other gathers and uses the information for reporting i.e. understanding everyone's roles in evaluation.”*



### What we learned

It was amazing for ESS that SPN was still building on the work we did with them in 2011! This 2023 support was successful because CEO Lesley was clear what she needed and briefed the staff well, so they knew what they were coming to. It was important for ESS to make the support really practical and harness staff practice expertise. Building analysis of existing evaluation data into the session allowed the team to celebrate impact and spot gaps in the data that would be useful to collect in future. It was valuable to give people from different teams the chance to understand each other's roles in the evaluation process.

SPN evaluation illustrates [ESS's principles for good evaluation](#) – in particular “good evaluation fits the way you do you work” and “good evaluation involves the people you support” (in this case children and families) and “good evaluation is used by you”.

If you would like ESS's support please contact us at [info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk)

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