

Talent Match Evaluation and Learning Contract: 2013-19

Linking National and Local Evaluation

January 2015

Introduction

The Big Lottery Fund required all Talent Match partnerships to outline their plans for local evaluation in their full funding submission in June 2013. The purpose of this note is to provide guidance to partnerships in preparing and implementing these plans, to ensure that local and national evaluation is complementary, and to outline the support which partnerships may need in implementing their evaluation plans.

Our understanding is that Talent Match partnerships are approaching local evaluation in different ways and are at different stages in their consideration of local evaluation. Some partnerships had already clear ideas of the scope of their local evaluation, whilst others were not planning at present to undertake local evaluation.

A common issue to emerge was that whatever local evaluation is done it should be complimentary to the national evaluation and learning contract, and vice versa.

Other issues to emerge included:

- the role of young people in the evaluation process, including working as evaluators
- the connection to other evaluative activity being undertaken locally
- the scope to develop particular approaches to evaluation, such as social return on investment, and which could be used in future funding applications.

National Evaluation activities

The national evaluation will be undertaking a range of data collection activities. These are outlined in a separate note (Summary for Partnerships) but are summarised here for convenience:

- Development and implementation of a Common Data Framework
- Longitudinal annual survey of a cohort of beneficiaries
- In-depth annual interviews with beneficiaries
- Surveys of partnership leads and partners
- Annual programme of engagement with each partnership (akin to a detailed case study)
- Multimedia case studies of beneficiaries

In addition to this *primary* data we will also draw on a range of monitoring and administrative data (e.g. monitoring reports, local plan and strategy documents) and nationally collected

data which can be analysed at a local level (notably labour market information and Census data).

The purpose of these data collection and analysis activities is both to inform BIG and stakeholders but also to support the development of each partnership. This might be through routine quarterly bulletins, action learning sets, some one-to-one advice, or workshops for all partnerships.

Whilst the national evaluation has a series of key reporting deadlines for BIG, it is also intended to be flexible and respond to emergent issues. These will be set out on annual basis in a workplan.

Despite this wide ranging approach, local partners will clearly have evaluation priorities which may not be met by the national evaluation work. Examples might include in-depth work around a specific innovative approach, the need to have local evidence to support future funding, or the active support of young people as evaluators of the local projects.

Planning for Local Evaluation

We have already noted that planning for local evaluation varies between the partnerships. Nonetheless we would recommend that each partnership give some consideration to generating an evaluation plan. Such a plan might consider the following issues:

Issues to consider	Examples
What are the key questions for local evaluation to address?	Does our approach to involving young people work? Is the involvement of the private sector appropriate? Can our approach to targeting hard to reach groups be improved? Are there particular projects we wish to evaluate because they are large/risky/innovative?
What is the timescale for evaluation?	Is this a one-off exercise, ongoing or part of an (annual) cycle of planning?
What evidence do we need to collect?	Does evidence already exist (through monitoring records, other local sources or the national evaluation)? How can we most effectively collect evidence? Can we ensure that this will be fit for purpose? What use can we make of the CDF and local labour market information? Are data stored securely and confidentiality of personal data maintained? Are there any ethical issues which need to be considered? Do we wish to have a longitudinal part of data collection, where data are collected from the same people at different times?
How are young people to be involved?	Will young people be involved in the design of evaluation plans? Will young people collect data? What will the benefits for young people be?
How will data be analysed?	Will analysis be conducted in-house? Do we want to have a standard approach to data analysis? Do we need to ensure consistent analysis over time (for instance to allow comparisons to be made)?
How will evaluation be managed and reported?	Who will be responsible for evaluation What are the main audiences for the evaluation, and what are the needs of different audiences?
What resources are required for evaluation?	Will the evaluation be conducted by the partnership or use a separately contracted organisation?

This is not an exhaustive list. Other issues and questions are likely to emerge in individual partnerships. Nonetheless, this provides a starting point for structuring the evaluation.

How can Local and National Evaluation work together?

Talent Match is asking local partners to evaluate their projects in different ways since all projects are different; and neither BIG nor the national evaluation should constrain this. Nonetheless, where possible duplication should be avoided and data collected in the most robust way possible.

The Evaluation and Learning contract has a supporting and facilitative role to play in local evaluation. This might involve working with local partnerships to:

- run workshops for local partnerships into specific evaluation approaches. The use of approaches such as social return on investment or the role of young people as evaluators may be of use here.
- supporting events through which partnerships can share experiences of local evaluation
- providing a forum (either through workshops or an online forum) to share findings
- to provide support and guidance on a one-to-one basis to individual partnerships
- providing each partnership with local headline findings from the national evaluation.

These are just suggestions. If there are support needs, please get in touch with the evaluation team.

Contact Information

The main contacts for the evaluation and learning contract in the business planning phase will be Peter Wells and Ryan Powell, both at Sheffield Hallam University. Their contact details are below. Please feel free to contact them to discuss any aspect of the evaluation and learning contract.

Project Director:

Peter Wells
Tel: 0114 225 3073
Email: p.wells@shu.ac.uk

Project Manager:

Ryan Powell
Tel: 0114 225 3073
Email: r.s.powell@shu.ac.uk

Postal Address

CRESR
Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 10 Science Park
Howard Street
Sheffield
S1 1WB

We have a a dedicated contact point for each partnership. This person will be from CRESR, IER or CEA. They will lead all fieldwork in your partnership area and also be the first point of contact regarding the evaluation and learning contract.