

NCVO CHARITIES EVALUATION SERVICES

PRACTICAL SUPPORT ON IMPACT AND EVALUATION

Background information

NCVO Charities Evaluation Services (NCVO CES) is the leading evaluation consultancy for the voluntary sector. Over 27 years, we have worked with tens of thousands of voluntary organisations, their funders and commissioners, helping them improve their effectiveness through practical impact measurement, evaluation, theory of change and strategy support. [Find out more about us here.](#)

Each year NCVO CES works with more than 1,000 voluntary organisations. Our extensive [training provision](#), sector-leading [guidance and publications](#), and breadth of practical experience give us the expertise to support organisations in demonstrating their impact and championing their work.

Our knowledge and expertise in monitoring, evaluation and strategy are combined with a flexible, supportive and realistic approach. Our main support work focuses on planning for self-evaluation, developing a theory of change, and practical support to collect outcomes and impact data.

As the go-to organisational for the voluntary sector, we understand the challenges organisations face and the vital role they play in local communities and society across the UK. We work with clients to produce practical approaches, tailored to meet the specific services, user groups and needs of their organisation.

Our development support offer

It is anticipated that for most organisations, a 4.5-day package of work, encompassing stages 1, 2, 3 and 6 (below), is enough to give organisations the foundations for decent evaluation. We can work with organisations for up to 6 days, including the 1-day diagnostic session.

Stages one and two would be conducted face-to-face, usually at the charity. The remaining stages are likely to be conducted remotely.

Stage 1: Diagnostic - 1 Day

We will prepare for and hold a set-up meeting with the funded organisation to look at their current monitoring and evaluation approach, skills and tools, agree the purpose and scope of the work and timescales.

Stage 2: Stakeholder engagement and planning - 1.5 days

We will develop and run a planning workshop for key staff (and potentially volunteers, service users and/or trustees), to identify outcomes, outputs and indicators. Our standard approach is to use the theory of change methodology as a tool for articulating desired changes and the activities that will achieve those.

Stage 3: Developing evaluation plans – 1.5 days

Using the information gained from the workshop, we will develop an evaluation framework or plan, working closely with the organisation so they gain a clear understanding of the process. Depending on the capacity of the organisation, this may require a further workshop to explore priority indicators and methods of collection. These frameworks commonly define outputs, outcomes, indicators and data collection tools and processes.

Stage 4: Audit of existing data collection tools and processes - 1 day

With the framework developed, we will support the organisation to identify any gaps where outcomes are not currently being measured or could be measured more effectively. This could include reviewing existing monitoring systems, user questionnaires, or casework record templates. We will look where organisations are collecting more data than they appear to need.

Stage 5: Guidance on tools and next steps - 1 day

We produce guidance for funded organisations on the tools and processes they may need to collect additional data needed or to improve existing systems. We will talk this through with the organisation so that they are clear about our advice and what they should do next. Within the timeframe of support, we are not able to develop the tools and processes but would leave them with a plan for next steps.

Final stage: Follow up - 0.5 day

We will conduct a follow-up session, within nine months of the support, to troubleshoot any issues and provide additional motivation to staff to continue improving their outcomes approach.

Additional options

Charities which are more advanced in their monitoring and evaluation may have additional needs such as:

- Developing a **theory of change** for their organisation, including consulting with a range of stakeholders. A theory of change often includes a visual map and an accompanying narrative, which can be used for planning, evaluation, communications and strategy.

- Help with **analysis and reporting of outcome data**, to ensure that data is presented in a way that meets the information needs of all stakeholders, including both the grantee and the funder.

Any additional needs can be discussed with NCV CES and a bespoke package of support can be agreed (up to 6 days to include the one-day diagnostic and follow up session)

How do I know if this provider is right for my charity?

This option is for organisations that need better data on their outcomes. Better outcomes data will help them develop their services through improved decision-making and, we hope, ensure better outcomes for their users. It will help organisations better articulate the difference they make, their achievements to stakeholders, and accountability to funders.

Through being able to understand and evidence their work, charities will be better placed to provide the right services, make informed decisions, make a stronger case for funding, and support greater trust and confidence in charities.

We work collaboratively and aim for the process to increase the capacity and skills of staff in terms of impact, evaluation and data.

Charity Feedback:

“NCVO CES Consultancy was very helpful in making us take the time to consider our current monitoring and evaluation processes, and how we can streamline our methods to help us in the future. We now have a monitoring and evaluation framework and are developing tools to gather feedback on our impact. It was very useful to have knowledge and experience from an external perspective.

“It has provided a framework to help us monitor all of our projects against our charitable aims and supports funding applications we write. It has saved us time, and allows staff to delegate more, with an easy to follow framework to use”.

“[The consultant] took time to understand our business, she met with staff which was very useful and got their buy-in for making changes throughout the support.”

“The consultant was very experienced and took time to understand our needs and prepare useful tools for us.”

“We have implemented the use of evaluation forms and have more efficient evaluation systems. We know what we are collecting and why.”

“It helped us to work together to produce a useful theory of change, that had been agreed with the whole team.”

Input needed from you

At the initial meeting with the charity, NCVO CES and the charity will agree a work plan that outlines the activities and timescales. In addition to any face-to-face time with the consultant, the charity will need to put in at least 5 days of work between sessions. In most cases, a number of staff will need to attend workshops.

It is important that the charity has someone who can drive this work forward afterwards. This support is about laying foundations for self-evaluation and will require someone in the funded organisation to lead on the work once the Enhance support has ended.