Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Evaluation Toolkit

GREATER MANCHESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

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Acknowledgements

This Evaluation Toolkit was developed as a result of a Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) project between GMFRS and the University of Salford. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a programme to help organisations improve their effectiveness and productivity through better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside in the UK knowledge base.

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How to Use the Toolkit

This guide is designed to assist in the evaluation of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) community safety initiatives. It has been divided in the following sections, to guide the users through the different stages of evaluation:

Part 1 **Understanding Evaluation**
A brief introduction to evaluation. Designed to answer questions such as, why, when and what to evaluate.

Part 2 **Planning Your Evaluation**
Assists with evaluation planning and the completion of the evaluation plan. Also gives brief examples of completed evaluation plans.

Part 3 **Gathering Evaluation Evidence and Making Sense of Findings**
Guidance on evaluation methods and how to use them.

Part 4 **Reporting and Sharing Evaluation Findings**
Explains how to write an evaluation report, and how to utilise and share the evaluation findings.

Next Steps

If you are new to evaluation read Part 1 and work your way systematically through the rest of the document.

If you are familiar with evaluation activities, you may wish to use Appendix A as a reminder. If you want to refresh any of the points mentioned in the evaluation summary, please refer to the corresponding part of the document.

This guide offers a brief introduction to evaluation. If you require more guidance on the different evaluation processes or the use of any of the evaluation tools, please contact:

Terri Byrne	Telephone: 0161 736 5866	Email: byrnet@manchesterfire.gov.uk
Ben Levy	Telephone: 0161 736 5866	Email: levyb@manchesterfire.gov.uk

Part 1 – Understanding Evaluation

1.1 What is Evaluation?

The term evaluation can be used in a variety of ways. The following definition represents the approach recommended for assessing community safety initiatives delivered by GMFRS.

> *"Evaluation is concerned with judging merit against some yardsticks. It involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data bearing on the achievement of an organisation's goals and programme objectives."*
>
> *(Phillips 1994)*

Evaluation refers to the activities that are used to explore projects and their achievements against the original aims and objectives. Evaluation includes four key stages: planning, gathering evidence, reporting and sharing findings.

Evaluation can provide evidence about how effective projects have been, and the reasons why. It is an essential component of effective and efficient project delivery, and enables the continuous improvement of community safety activities.

1.2 Why Evaluate?

Evaluation is a necessary part of all activities, as it helps to identify projects' effectiveness and reveal areas for improvement. Evaluation can help you to make informed decisions about why an activity is effective or ineffective and if it is an appropriate use of resources. It can also help to highlight future improvement needs, and determine if the project is worth delivering again, and if it is transferable to other areas.

1.3 Who Evaluates?

The person responsible for managing the project should ensure that evaluation is embedded in the project work plan.

An external evaluator could be considered when the initiative is resource intensive, highly visible, or an internal evaluation has indicated that a more in depth and/or objective assessment is necessary to gain further insight.

1.4 When to Evaluate?

Data collection is an important part of evaluation and has to be done during the project in a systematic way. Depending on the type of evaluation, the collection of data can take place at the beginning and end of the project, half way through, or throughout the project.

It is important to schedule evaluation activities into the project plan at the start of the project, to ensure that procedures are in place for the data collection at the appropriate time. If evaluation is only considered at the end of the project, it may not be feasible to collect meaningful data, in order to produce valid evaluation reports. It is also important to bear in mind that the collection of data might take place quite a while before and after the project to make sure any detected changes are real.

Table 1 indicates the approximate sequencing of the evaluation activities which take place during the different stages of the project life cycle:

Part One

Table 1: Phases of Evaluation Activities Corresponding to Project Cycle

	Project Planning Stage	Project Implementation Stage	Project Termination
Outcome / Impact Evaluation	▪ Decide to evaluate ▪ Define purpose, timeline, resource requirements and budget for evaluation ▪ Choose methods for data collection	▪ Develop / refine methods for data collection ▪ Collect data	▪ Analyse data ▪ Write the report ▪ Decide what to do with the project - carry on, change etc ▪ Communicate findings with the organisation and all the key stakeholders
Process Evaluation	▪ Decide to evaluate ▪ Define purpose, timeline, resource requirements and budget for evaluation ▪ Choose methods for data collection	▪ Develop / refine methods for data collection ▪ Collect data ▪ Analyse data ▪ Write the report ▪ Decide what to do with the project - change direction etc ▪ Communicate findings with the organisation and all the key stakeholders	

1.5 Types of Evaluation

There are many different types of evaluations, however the three main ones are: Process, Outcome and Impact. In evaluation literature, process evaluation is also known as formative evaluation and impact as summative. All of the different types of evaluations can be used singularly or in combination.

Process

Process evaluation helps to establish if the project is running according to the initial plan. An effective project may not yield the desired results if it is not delivered properly. Process evaluation is normally carried out half way through the project to examine the inputs, outputs and short term outcomes, and it can inform you of how to change the delivery methods of the project in order to achieve the planned outcomes. The concentration is on:

- how initiatives / services are delivered
- what actually occurs while providing services
- strengths and weaknesses of delivery methods

Outcome

Outcome evaluation helps to identify what occurred as a result of your project. It determines whether short, medium and / or long term outcomes have been achieved. Outcome evaluations tend to concentrate on:

- the end results of the project and if the project met its overall goal(s)
- what happened as a result of the project

Impact

Impact evaluation goes a little further than outcome. It doesn't only measure the outcomes, but also looks at why and how the project has worked, and how much of the outcomes were caused by other events. Impact evaluation focuses on the final long term, intended and unintended results, and aims to identify what are the wider changes that have taken place as a result of the initiative. Impact evaluations concentrate on:

- why the particular project brought about the change / impact
- additional benefits and unintended outcomes

If the aim of the evaluation is to improve the programme, choose process evaluation, and if the intention is to prove it works – choose outcome / impact evaluation.

Table 2 lists the benefits of these types of evaluations.

Table 2: Benefits of Formative and Summative Evaluation Questions[1]

Process Evaluation - Improve	Impact Evaluation - Prove
Provides information that helps you improve your programme. Generates periodic reports. Information can be shared quickly.	Generates information that can be used to demonstrate the results of your programme to funders and your community.
Focuses most on programme activities, outputs, and short term outcomes for the purpose of monitoring progress and making mid-course corrections when needed.	Focuses most on programmes medium term outcomes and impact. Although data may be collected throughout the programme, the purpose is to determine the value and worth based on results.
Helpful in bringing suggestions for improvement to the attention of staff.	Helpful in describing the quality and effectiveness of your programme by documenting its impact on participants and the community.

[1] W.K. Kellogg Foundation "Logic Model Development Guide"

1.6 What to Evaluate?

Table 3 gives an indication of the issues that could be evaluated as part of process (see input/output/short term outcomes) or outcome evaluation (see outcome/impact). Impact evaluation is normally underpinned by a theoretical model, and in addition to output and outcome evaluations would also include an in depth study of the wider context and external influencing factors.

Table 3: Logic Model[2]

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes - Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
What we invest	What we do	Who we reach	What the short term results are	What the medium term results are	What the ultimate impact(s) are
Staff Volunteers Time Money Research Base Materials Equipment Technology Partners	Conduct workshops, meetings Deliver services Develop products, curriculum, resources Train Provide counseling Assess Facilitate Partner Work with media	Participants Clients Agencies Decision-makers Customers	Learning Awareness Knowledge Attitudes Skills Opinions Aspirations Motivations	Action Behaviour Practice Decision-making Policies Social action	Conditions Social Economic Civic Environmental

[2] University of Wisconsin Program Development and Evaluation 2002

Part 2 – Planning Your Evaluation

2.1 How to Plan an Evaluation?

1. Develop a Project Logic Model

To conduct an effective evaluation, the aims and objectives of the initiative must be clearly defined. If your project doesn't have clearly articulated aims and objectives, the project logic model (Appendix B) can be used to help you to clarify your thinking about what the project is designed to achieve, and which aspects of the project could be evaluated. Once you are clear about the outcomes the initiative is designed to achieve you can then start to think about the questions that you would need to ask to assess if these outcomes have been attained.

Example of a Completed Logic Model – Moss Side Boxing Club

Project Aim: To engage with local youth to prevent them from attacking firefighters and setting fires					
Inputs	**Outputs - Activities**	**Outputs - Participation**	**Outcomes Short Term**	**Outcomes Medium Term**	**Outcomes Long Term**
Building. Equipment. Time.	Teach boxing to 5 different groups, based on their skills and fitness levels. Educate young people about discipline, respect and courage to change.	Local Youths.	Community engagement. Young People - awareness of Fire Service activities, and positive attitude towards fire fighters. Young people - awareness of good behaviour.	Young people - increased self esteem, opinions of FRS changed, and behaviour improved. FRS - better understanding of community needs.	Less attacks on fire fighters. Less fire crime. Safer communities.
Assumption: Boxing has a certain kudos, it increases self esteem, and it can increase the respect that an individual gets from their peer group. If these young people have an influence in a gang or group situation and they have an affinity to the fire service then, we are in a win-win situation where we can help to form citizens of the future whilst having ambassadors for the Fire Service on the streets of Moss Side.				**External Factors:** Gangs GMFRS support Partner agencies Trainers availability	

Part Two

2. Develop an evaluation plan and select the audience

Select the people who are going to contribute to your evaluation. These could be FRS officers, other agencies or delivery partners, members of community and/or individuals taking part in the initiatives.

Develop an evaluation plan which should clarify what aspects of the project to evaluate, the questions to ask and the indicators of success. In Appendix C you will find a proforma to complete after taking account of the following:

How to choose the evaluation focus area?

Evaluation focus area refers to the part of the project you aim to evaluate. The focus area can represent the inputs, outputs or outcomes you are aiming to investigate in your evaluation. Depending on the type of evaluation and your resources, you can choose to evaluate all aspects of the project or only some of them. Decide on the focus area based on what you want to know about the project, and what resources you have available for the evaluation.

How to define an evaluation question?

Evaluation questions are the major questions related to each focus area - the questions you want to answer in the evaluation. Evaluation questions need to be relevant to the focus areas, and need to be kept as simple as possible.

How to select the indicators?

Indicators are observable and measurable milestones and/or targets that indicate to you whether the project or the participants are making any progress towards the outcomes.

For example if one of the outcomes of the project was to educate the participants about discipline, respect, and courage, the following table demonstrate the indictors that could be used to identify any progress made towards these goals.

Outcome	Indicators
Discipline	▪ turn up on time ▪ attend regularly
Courage	▪ don't give up ▪ courage to change and control aggressive behaviour
Respect	▪ respect others ▪ respect equipment ▪ listen coaches

How to choose the methods?

The definition of the evaluation questions and indicators are important precursors to the selection of data collection methods. The data-collection methods should be determined based on how appropriate they are for answering your key evaluation questions and for achieving the ultimate purpose of the evaluation. The credibility and usefulness of the evaluation results can be strengthened by mixing evaluation methods where appropriate.

Tie method selection to available resources, and what is appropriate for the target population. Bear in mind that data collection and analysis can be very time consuming; Part 3 can help you to determine suitable methods for your evaluation.

Example of a Completed Evaluation Plan – Moss Side Boxing Club

1. Evaluation Focus Area	2. Evaluation Question	3. Indicators	4. Method
Input Resources	What resources are used for project delivery?	Cost of building, equipment, travel and time	Data analysis and interviews
Output 1 Engage with local youth	Is the project reaching its target population?	The attendees' postcodes	Postcode mapping and analysis
Output 2 Mentoring - teaching the participants about the qualities of firefighters: Respect, Discipline and Courage.	What have the children learnt at the boxing club? What do the children get out of the boxing club?	Attitudes and beliefs of the participants (in relation to the questions) Discipline: turn up on time, attend regularly Courage: Don't give up, courage to change and control aggressive behaviour Respect: respect others, respect gym equipment, listen to coaches.	Interviews with trainers and participants Interviews with parents, schools and partner agencies Analysis of attendance records

3. Decide who collects the data, how often, when and where

To ensure the evaluation causes minimum disturbance to the project delivery, it is essential to plan the activities and everyone's responsibilities in advance.

When designing your evaluation it is important to consider the resources requirements. Plan for time and costs – evaluation is resource intensive, around 10% of the total project costs (including staff time) should be budgeted for evaluation. Appendix D can help you to design a timetable for the evaluation.

4. Design and Test Materials

Choose the methods you consider most suitable for your data collection from the list in Part 3. After you have designed your materials, it is advisable to test them on a target audience. Ideally, you should test them on the same kinds of people you will include in the study. However this is not always possible, so invite a few people to have a look at the tools to ensure they are easy to understand and give you meaningful answers.

Example of a Competed Evaluation Timetable – Moss Side Boxing Club

Moss Side Boxing Club																
	Year 2009															
Task	**July**				**August**				**September**				**October**			
Training – Person A	X															
Interviews with participants and parents – Person B			X	X	X	X										
Interviews with trainers – Person A		X														
Interviews with partner agencies – Person B					X	X										
Postcode Analysis – Person A							X	X								
Document Analysis – Person B									X	X						
Data Analysis – Person A							X	X	X	X	X	X				
Report Writing – Person A													X	X		

2.2 Evaluation Check List

Before starting any evaluation process, make sure the following issues have been considered.

Item	Yes	No	Comments
Has the evaluation plan been completed?			
Have the right resources (time, money and staff) been allocated to the evaluation?			
Does the evaluation process have a clear timetable?			
Have all the stakeholders, including the participants, been informed of the evaluation?			
Have you addressed any emerging ethical issues, discussed in Part 3?			

Part 3 – Gathering Evaluation Evidence And Making Sense Of Findings

3.1 Introduction to Methods

There are a range of methods that can be used to gather the data on which an evaluation can be based. Each of the different methods have their own strengths and weaknesses which influences the ways in which they can be applied. Evaluations should make use of primary and secondary research, as well as a mix of different methods to increase validity and reliability. The methods that have been chosen as most appropriate for use in the evaluation of GMFRS projects are:

- Focus Groups
- Nominal Group Technique
- Interviews
- Record/Document Analysis
- Questionnaires

See Section 3.6 for further details on these methods, including their advantages, disadvantages and cost implications, as well guidance on how to use them.

3.2 How to Select the Methods

Table 4 indicates the suitability of each of the methods for measuring hard and soft outcomes, and their applicability to process, outcome and impact evaluations. The aim of the table is not to restrict you to these techniques, but to recommend some popular and reliable ones that are used for evaluation. If you wish to experiment with other methods, ensure they are reliable ways of testing and measuring the project achievements.

Before deciding on methods always consider resource implications, the projects delivery approach and target audience. Also, if the project has delivery partners, or if other agencies have evaluated or are considering to evaluate the project, think about sharing data with them and utilising it in your evaluation.

Table 4: Research Methods for Different Types of Evaluations

Method	Hard Outcomes	Soft Outcomes	Process	Outcome/Impact
Focus Group		✓	✓	✓
Nominal Group Technique			✓	✓
Interviews		✓	✓	✓
Record/Document Analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓
Questionnaires	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cost Allocation, Cost Benefit, Cost Effectiveness	✓		✓	✓

Part Three

When selecting the methods, consider how credible the evaluation will be as a result of the methods that have been chosen. When deciding between various methods and instruments, ask the following questions:

Are the methods suitable for the population being studied and the issue being assessed? Think whether the target group has any special needs. For example, some youth groups might have difficulties reading, therefore face-to-face interviews might work better than questionnaires. When dealing with children and young people keep the tools simple and easy to follow.

Is the data collection tool valid? In other words, does it measure what it claims to measure? For example if you aim to measure participants attitude to fire safety, ensure the questions are relevant to the topic, and focus on the indicators you are trying to assess.

Is the data collection tool reliable? In other words, will it provide the same answers even if it is administered at different times or by different people? For example if two evaluators undertook an interview with the same individuals, the responses should be very similar.

3.3 How to Increase Validity and Reliability of Evaluation Findings?

Triangulation - a good way to increase the credibility of your evaluation findings is to use more than one method to collect your data. Evaluation designs should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods whenever possible.

Sampling - is concerned with the number of participants taking part in the research. In most cases the number of people taking part in GMFRS initiatives is fairly low, therefore it would be advisable to use the whole group as a sample for the evaluation. If this is not possible, make sure you include a variety of people in the sample. Try to select individuals who are representative of the participants and don't just

pick people from one group, or people who are likely to give you the answer you want.

Control Group - a group of people that is matched as closely as possible with participants, but who are not participating in the project, can be used to validate the changes that occur in the participant's group as a consequence of the initiative. However it is not always possible or realistic to include a control group in the evaluation process.

3.4 Limitations to Evaluation

Always try to ensure your data collection tools are properly developed, your sample group is representative of the reality and you have interpreted the findings objectively. However bear in mind that all evaluations have their limitations. In the real world no one can guarantee that an evaluation is 100% valid and reliable due to various issues. Some common factors that contribute to the limitations are experience, skills, resources (time and money) and location.

It is important to reflect on the limitations of the evaluation in the final report. Talking about the limitations doesn't mean the report is any less valid, but it helps the reader to understand the context in which the project took place, and allows you to reflect on the quality of the data collection tools, the use of resources and the effectiveness of the evaluation process.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Participants in evaluation have moral and legal rights, and it is important that when you are conducting an evaluation you do not violate these rights. You should try to ensure that your enthusiasm for getting answers does not lead you to pay less attention to the rights of the participants. There are a range of issues related to research ethics that you should consider[3]:

- **Voluntary Participation** – Taking part in the evaluation should never be compulsory. Beware that some people are more likely to volunteer than others and reliance on volunteers may introduce bias into your findings.

- **Informed Consent** - It is important to ensure everyone taking part in the evaluation understands the purpose of the study, how they were selected, and what will happen to the evaluation report, so that they can make informed judgments about whether to take part.

- **No Harm to Participants** - The evaluation process or the end report should never cause any harm to the participants, including being embarrassed. Questions which may upset or harm the participants should not be asked.

- **CRB / Vetting** - Appropriate vetting procedures including a check of criminal records may need to be carried out on any person involved in the interview of children. Parental consent must be obtained to interview children under the age of 16, and it is good practice to gain consent for young people under 18. (For further guidance contact the CYP department)

- **Confidentiality** – all details of the participants should be kept private by the evaluator and not disclosed to a third party. If confidentiality is guaranteed, do not share participants details with anyone, and ensure the participants are not identifiable from any published materials. There are certain exceptions to confidentiality, when dealing with children and young people. The CYP department can provide further guidance on the matter, specifically with regard to the disclosure of personal issues by children.

- **Data Collection and Storage** - Evaluation may gather sensitive data regarding the participants. Ensure you comply with data protection guidelines available on BigRed and protect participant's anonymity.

[3] Adapted from "Ethical Issues" Social Research Method.net

3.6 How to Use the Methods

In Section 3.6 details of the following methods and their use is provided:

Method A - Focus Groups (p20)

A semi structured group discussion to examine stakeholder's attitudes and opinions to services, concepts and ideas

Method B - Nominal Groups (p22)

A group technique that allows individuals to think about the issues themselves before the groups makes a joint decision about the topic. Used to identify areas for improvement and as a decision making / voting tool.

Method C - Interviews (p24)

One to one discussion with a stakeholder or participant to collect qualitative data about the participant's attitudes and opinions.

Method D - Record/Document Analysis (p26)

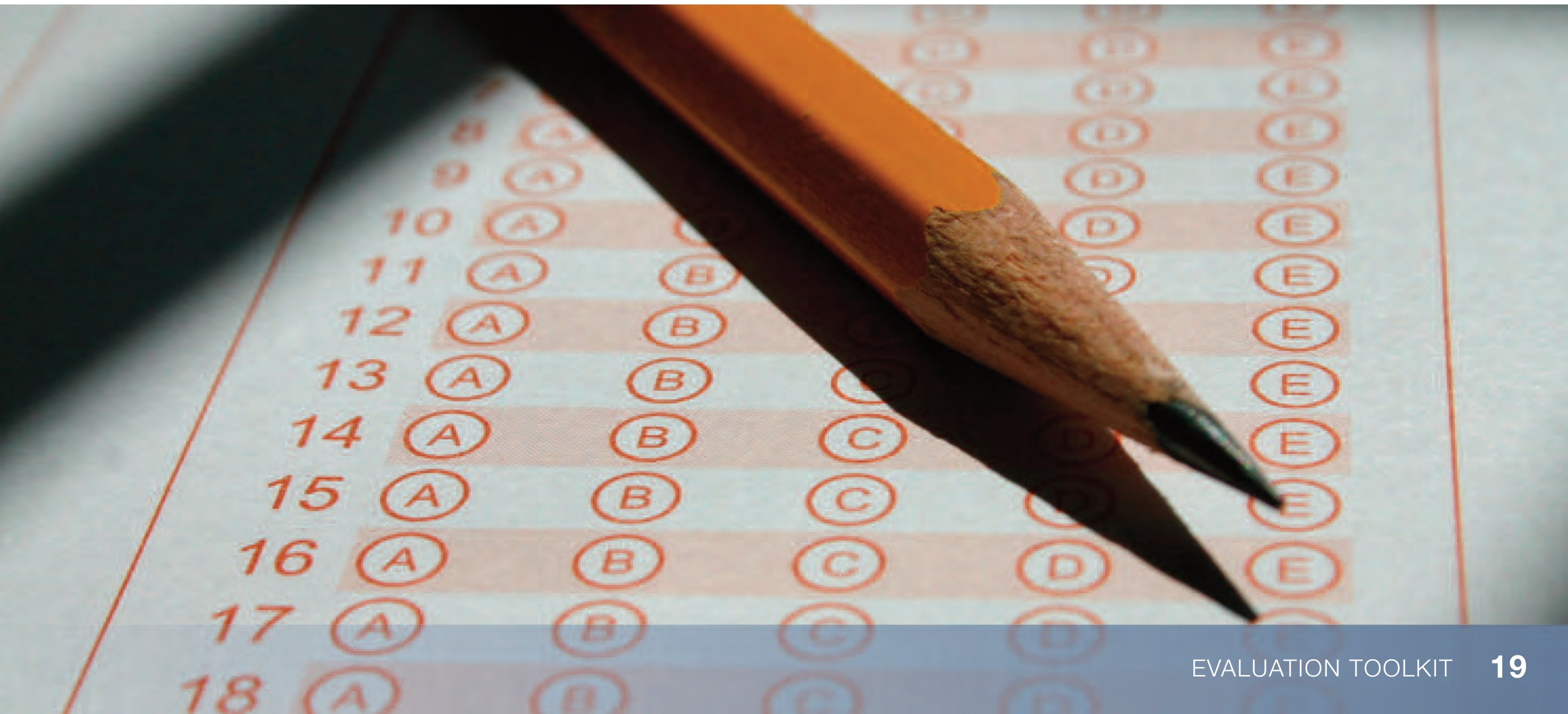
The study of existing documentation including: existing FRS and partner data, archives, statistics and any other existing research data.

Method E - Questionnaires (p27)

Questionnaires can be used to collect quantitative and qualitative data and to measure attitudes, values, personal experiences and behaviour.

Method F - Cost Analysis (p30)

Examines the cost of an initiative and the use of resources.



Method A – Focus Groups

Description

- A semi structured qualitative group discussion with 6 to 10 stakeholders
- Lead by a facilitator who follows an outline and manages group dynamics
- Focus groups are used to develop a better understanding of stakeholder's attitudes and opinions to services, concepts and ideas
- Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members

Application

- Could be used as part of any evaluation process of any initiative

Advantages

- Provides in-depth information
- Focus groups have a high apparent validity - since the idea is easy to understand, the results are believable
- Low in cost; focus groups allow you to talk to several people at once and access results relatively quickly
- Limited time requirement on the participants

Disadvantages

- Participants can influence each other
- The evaluator has less control over a group than a one-on-one interview
- Time can be lost on discussion of issues irrelevant to the evaluation
- The data can be difficult to analyse because the discussion includes the participants reaction to the comments of other group members

Validity and Reliability

- Observer bias: the results obtained can be influenced by the evaluator, raising questions of validity
- Can be subjective due to the potential for facilitator bias
- Could be used in conjunction with other methods to increase validity and reliability

Resource Requirements and Cost

- Wages (session and analysis)
- Facilitator to set up and facilitate
- Observer to make notes
- Possible training for facilitators
- Audio equipment to capture discussions and play back for analysis

Analysis

- Principles of qualitative analysis

Additional Information

- Normally used in conjunction with observations, questionnaires and/or interviews

How to Run Focus Groups

Prepare a topic list and a question guide in advance of inviting around 6 to 10 people to participate in the focus group. It is advisable to record the discussion, but this is conditional on the informed consent of all the participants. Contemporaneous notes of the discussion should also be taken to supplement the recording.

A typical programme for a focus group is as follows[4]:

Introduction

- Explain what the topic is and why you are holding the focus group
- Ask the participants to introduce themselves and to prepare a name tag
- Explain the ground rules: confidentiality, everyone will have different views – respect that/don't criticise, everyone should have a say; everyone's views count

Sign in sheet

- To provide feedback if necessary

Content

- Work through the questions

Close

- Thank all the participants
- Agree to provide feedback

Tips for Running Focus Groups

- Develop your questions ahead of time
- Ask open ended questions
- Encourage free-flowing discussion and keep the session on track
- Start on an issue people are familiar with
- To encourage conversations, ask participants to think about an issue for a few minutes and write down their responses
- A summary document, should be produced for each session to circulate to participants

[4] Adapted from Tyne and Wear FRS Evaluation Guide

Method B – Nominal Group Technique

Description

- The nominal group technique is a decision making method for use among groups, who want to make their decision quickly
- Every member of the group gives their view of the topic. Duplicate views are eliminated, and the members proceed to rank the remaining ideas in order of preference. All scores are then totalled, revealing the most favoured items.
- It can identify strengths versus areas in need of development

Application

- Could be used as part of any evaluation process of any initiative

Advantages

- Effective decision-making
- Eliminates peer influence/ “group thinking”
- Produces large number of ideas in a short space of time
- Easy to analyse

Disadvantages

- Opinion may not converge in the voting process
- Ideas may be constrained

Validity and Reliability

- Observer dependency: the results obtained can be influenced by the evaluator, raising questions of validity.
- Subjective potential for facilitator bias.
- Could be used in conjunction with other tests to increase validity and reliability

Resource Requirements and Cost

- Wages (session and analysis)
- Facilitator, (Observer)
- Possible training

Analysis

- Principles of quantitative analysis

Additional Information

- To be used in conjunction with other tests (Triangulation)

How to Run Nominal Groups

In this technique, five to nine participants sit around a table, together with a leader. If there are more participants, they are divided into small groups. A single session, which deals with a single question, usually takes about 60-90 minutes. The basic steps are[5]:

1. Silent generation of ideas in writing – after making a welcoming statement, the leader reads aloud the question that the participants are to answer. Then each participant is given a worksheet (with the question printed at the top) and asked to take five minutes to write his or her ideas. Discussion is not permitted.

2. "Round-robin" feedback of ideas – the leader goes around the table and asks each member to contribute one of his or her ideas summarised in a few words and write them on a flip chart. These ideas are numbered and written so they are visible to all members. The process goes on until no further ideas are forthcoming. Discussion is not permitted during this stage.

3. Serial discussion of ideas – each of the ideas on the board is discussed in turn. The objective of this discussion is to obtain clarity and to air points of view, but not to resolve differences of opinion.

4. Preliminary vote – the participants are asked to select a specific number of "most important" items from the total list (usually five to nine). Then they are to rank these items on cards. The cards are collected and shuffled to maintain anonymity, and the votes are read out and recorded on a tally-chart that shows all the items and the rank numbers allocated to each.

5. Discussion of preliminary vote – a brief discussion of the voting pattern is now permitted. Members are told that the purpose of this discussion is additional clarification, and not to pressure others to change their votes.

6. Final vote – Step 4 is repeated.

Tips for Running a Nominal Group

- Develop your question ahead of time
- Encourage individuals to express their views at the appropriate time and keep the session on track
- Make sure you have flip chart sheets, the means of displaying them and the voting cards with you
- A summary document should be produced for each session to circulate to participants

[5] Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook

Method C – Interviews

Description

- Interviews are used to collect qualitative data about the participant's attitudes and opinions
- Telephone or in-person one-on-one interviews
- Interviewer follows an outline but has flexibility

Application

- Could be used as part of any evaluation process of any initiative
- Interviews are particularly good to measure soft outcomes, especially if participants lack literacy skills

Advantages

- Eliminates peer influence
- Opportunity for interviewer to explore unexpected issues
- Can provide very detailed information
- Allows the use of probes, such as pictures, to measure attitudinal change

Disadvantages

- Can be very time consuming (interview and analysis)
- Potential for interviewer bias
- Interview skills required
- Can be difficult to analyse

Validity and Reliability

- Potential for interviewer and interviewee bias - the interviewer's own perceptions and question asking style can affect answers
- Poorly worded questions, ways questions are asked and misunderstandings can engender unreliable responses
- Validity and reliability issues could be limited by using structured questions and by undertaking interview skills training

Resource Requirements and Cost

- Wages (interview and analysis)
- Possible training
- Plenty of one-on-one time with the participants
- Plenty of time for the analysis, especially if the sample size is large

Analysis

- Principles of qualitative analysis

Additional Information

- Good for pre and post tests

How to Run Interviews

Interviews can give in-depth and detailed information, and can be used in all phases of an evaluation. The inside knowledge gained from interviews can provide an in-depth understanding of hard-to-measure concepts such as the impact of peer pressure on behaviour.

When interviewing participants/stakeholders, work through your question list and write down everything they say. Do not comment on their views, whether negative or positive, or empathise with their feelings. Your role is only to listen what they have to say and be respectful of their views. If at any point during the interview you are not clear about their comments, ask them to clarify. Do not be tempted to summarise their views based on what you think they might have said. Also allow the participants to see the questions and all the notes that you make. No secrecy is necessary, as it might harm the relationship with the interviewee.

If you wish to record an interview, first obtain permission from the interviewee. If there are indications that the presence of the tape recorder makes the Interviewees uncomfortable, consider taking handwritten notes instead.

Some Guidelines for Interviewing[6]:

Introduce Yourself

- Explain who you are and why you wish to interview the participants, how long the interview will take, and that taking part in the study is voluntary.
- Emphasise that the participants help is important and encourage them to speak openly. “We want to know what you really think!”

Confidentiality

- If anonymity is promised, it must be respected
- Offer them copies of your notes if they want them

The Interview

- Behave as neutrally as possible, even if the views that are expressed are not what you would wish. Pay special attention to your body language and tone of voice

Recording

- Keep writing as you talk, and if face to face keep as much eye contact as possible. When conducting phone interviews use encouraging/listening noises or phrases

The End

- At the end thank them for their time, explain what happens next, how they can see the report and affirm the confidentiality

[6] Adapted from Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook

Method D – Record / Document Analysis

Description

- Refers to the study of existing documentation, including FRS and partner data, archives, statistics and any other research data
- Aim is to collect information about participants or projects in a standardised manner
- Includes service utilisation - the use and utilisation of partner data

Application

- Could be used as part of any evaluation process of any initiative

Advantages

- Can be incorporated into normal routine
- Fairly straight forward method
- Can provide accurate and detailed information
- Resource efficient - no need to collect the data as it already exists
- Easily accessible, and can be inexpensive
- Can lead to information sharing opportunities

Disadvantages

- Documents are always produced for a certain purpose - can be difficult to relate to your evaluation
- Can be time consuming to analyse large quantities of data
- No guarantees of the quality of data - "the method is as good as the documents"
- Doesn't answer the "why" questions

Validity and Reliability

- No guarantees about the creditability and authenticity of the records and/or the documentation

Resource Requirements and Cost

- Access to documentation
- Time for analysis

Analysis

- Principles of Qualitative or Quantitative Analysis, depending on the documents

Additional Information

- To be used with other tests (Triangulation)
- Evaluators need to know exactly what they are looking for - important to have well established evaluation questions

Tips for a Record / Document Analysis

Internal and external documents are a source of potentially valuable data for your evaluation. These can include project reports, activity schedules, funding proposals, participant records, literature, etc. Such materials enable the evaluator to learn about the history, goals and outcomes of a particular project, and also provide clues about important shifts in the development of the initiative or its maturation. All project related reports are particularly helpful in learning how the project originated, how it is organised, what it claims to do, how it intends to reach its objectives and the nature of its target population.

Always bear in mind that written documents do not necessarily provide comprehensive or correct answers to specific problems, as they may contain errors, omissions, or exaggerations. They are simply one form of evidence, and should be used carefully and in connection with other types of data[7].

[7] Adapted from Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook

Method E – Questionnaires

Description

- Questionnaires can be used to collect quantitative and qualitative data and to measure attitudes, values, personal experiences and behaviour
- Open ended questions add depth to quantitative data and help to further explore the reasons behind statistics

Application

- Could be used as part of any evaluation process of most of the initiatives
- Questionnaires suit both small (CYP projects) and large (HFRA) scale initiatives and can be used to measure both soft and hard outcomes.

Advantages

- Quantitative questionnaires are easy to analyse
- Cheaper and less time consuming than interviews
- Easy to understand
- Provide information with the potential to be quantified

Disadvantages

- Qualitative questionnaires can be time consuming to analyse
- Quantitative questionnaires are not very flexible
- Question wording can cause problems
- Not suitable for illiterate and non-English speaking participants

Validity and Reliability

- Depends on the skills of those designing the questionnaire
- Need to pay attention to design to avoid validity and reliability problems

Resource Requirements and Cost

- Time to develop, administer and analyse the questionnaires

Analysis

- Principles of quantitative or qualitative analysis, depending on the questions

Additional Information

- Good for pre and post tests

Method E – Questionnaires (continued)

How to Design a Questionnaire [8]?

When designing a questionnaire, it is important to pay extra attention to the questionnaire design. In order to obtain accurate and relevant information, you have to give some thought to what questions you ask, how you ask them, the order you ask them in, and the general layout of the questionnaire.

Format of the Questionnaire

Introduction

It seems a good idea to have either a personalised covering letter or at least an introduction explaining briefly the purpose of the questionnaire, the importance of the respondents' participation, who is responsible for the questionnaire, and a statement guaranteeing confidentiality.

Arranging the questions

The order of the questions is also important. Some general rules are:

- Go from general to particular.
- Go from easy to difficult.
- Go from factual to abstract.
- Start with closed format questions.
- Start with questions relevant to the main subject.
- Do not start with demographic and personal questions.

Wording of Individual Questions

The way questions are phrased is important and there are some general rules for constructing good questions in a questionnaire.

Use short and simple sentences

Short, simple sentences are generally less confusing and ambiguous than long, complex ones. As a rule of thumb, most sentences should contain one or two clauses. Sentences with more than three clauses should be rephrased.

Ask for only one piece of information at a time

For example, "Please rate the presentation in terms of its content and presentation" asks for two pieces of information at the same time. It should be divided into two parts: "Please rate the presentation in terms of (a) its content, (b) its presentation."

Avoid negatives if possible

Negatives should be used only sparingly. For example, instead of asking students whether they agree with the statement, "Small group teaching should not be abolished," the statement should be rephrased as, "Small group teaching should continue." Double negatives should always be avoided.

[8] Leung WC "How to conduct a survey"

Ask precise questions

Questions may be ambiguous because a word or term may have a different meaning. For example, if you ask the participants to rate their feelings towards the emergency services, this term could mean different things to different people. For some it could mean the Police and Ambulance Services, and for others it could mean only the Fire Service.

Another source of ambiguity is a failure to specify a frame of reference. For example, in the question, "How often did you attend the boxing club?" the time reference is missing. It might be rephrased as, "How many times have you attended the boxing club within the last two weeks?"

Format of responses

The responses can be in open or closed formats. In an open ended question, the respondents can formulate their own answers. In closed format, respondents choose between several given options. It is possible to use a mixture of the two formats - for example, give a list of options, with the final option of "other" followed by a space for respondents to fill in other alternatives.

Sample open ended questions:

- Why did you first come to the boxing club?
- Have your reasons for attending changed in any way since joining the boxing club?
- What have you learnt at the boxing club, in addition to boxing?

Sample closed questions:

- Were you satisfied with the course delivery? (delete as appropriate)

  Yes / No / I don't know

- How often do you come to the club? (tick one)

  ☐ Twice a week
  ☐ Once a week
  ☐ Less than once a week

Sample scales:

- On a scale of 1-5, to what extent did the young person show willingness to undertake tasks and challenges?

  (1 being no interest, 5 being actively volunteering for activities/tasks)

- On a scale of 1-5, to what extent did the young person show understanding of the value and benefit of team working?

  (1 being no understanding, 5 being actively participating in team work, and encouraging others)

Method F – Cost Analysis

Different approaches to using cost analysis in evaluation[9]:

Cost Benefit – evaluates the project in terms of costs. It measures both the project costs and the results in monetary terms. This means that the results or benefits of the project must be translated into a monetary value. Social Return on Investment can help you to translate the non-tangible benefits of a project into a monetary value. A step by step guide is available from:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/090512_sroi.aspx

Cost Effectiveness – evaluates how the desired benefits can be achieved with the least amount of resources. Benefits are expressed only in terms of the impacts or outcomes themselves (they are not given a monetary value). Interpretation of this type of analysis requires stakeholders to decide if the benefit received is worth the cost of the project, or if there are other less expensive projects that would have similar or more beneficial results.

Cost Allocation – focuses on the total costs of the project and compares it against the planned resources. Cost allocation is a simpler concept than either cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis. Cost benefit and cost effectiveness are difficult to analyse, and can show very inaccurate results. At the project level, it basically means setting up budgeting and accounting systems in a way that allows project managers to determine a unit cost or cost per unit of service.

What Cost Analyses can tell you:

- Cost analyses can provide an estimate of what a project costs
- Cost analyses may improve understanding of project operation, and tell what parts of intervention are most cost-effective
- Cost analyses may reveal unexpected costs

What cost analysis cannot tell you:

- Whether or not the project is having a significant net effect on the desired outcomes
- Whether the least expensive alternative is always the best alternative

[9] M. Sewell and N. Marczak "Using Cost Analysis in Evaluation"

3.7 Making Sense of Findings

Once you have gathered all the data, you then need to analyse and present it in a form that everyone can understand. The evaluation findings should inform the decision making process, therefore the findings have to be in an easy to understand format. Don't be tempted to make the findings too simple though, i.e. one view, one percentage or one cost/benefit ratio only presents one point of view, and cannot explain the complexity of a whole project. Always present both positive and negative findings, and remember research offers probabilities, not absolutes - all qualitative and quantitative data contains varying degrees of error[10].

An evaluator rarely has all the information to make informed decisions about the future of the project. Therefore it is important to involve all the relevant stakeholders in this process. Patton's framework for reviewing data[11] is particularly useful for self-evaluations:

1. Description and Analysis

Describing and analysing data findings involves organising raw data into a form that reveals basic patterns. The evaluator presents, in user friendly fashion, the factual finding as revealed in actual data.

In case your data does not come in numerical form, the guidance below will help you to put your qualitative data in a more easy to report form.

Thematic Data Analysis
Categorise the paragraphs or sentences according to the themes. Themes are recurrent topics that are present in the data and could be describing the same theme but just using different words[12].

10 Michael Quinn Patton "Utilisation Focused Evaluation"
11 Michael Quinn Patton "Utilisation Focused Evaluation"
12 Adapted from Carla Palmer - Derbyshire FRS

Process : name or label the theme, define the theme and then identify data relevant to the theme, e.g. quotations or observations. See below for example.

Lack of effective communication	Low cohesion in group	Role confusion
I haven't been told what happens next and it makes me feel uncertain	Committee is made up of a lot of little Gods… rife with personality conflicts	Half the time you don't know what you're suppose to be doing
The message wasn't passed on to me, and I wasn't aware of the tasks	I am not sure how people see me in the group, whether they think I doing a good job or not	Don't really know sometimes what they expect me to do or how they want it done

Formalised Content Analysis
This is where you count the instance of event or word. It is a form which allows you to change qualitative into quantitative information which can be easier to analysis e.g. you have a paragraph that mentions a negative regarding the scheme that the cost is too expensive three times then this would have a count of three. You would then look for the balance, the positive which could be someone mentions the cost was justified then you could do a comparison possibly 3 negative to 1 positive.

2. Interpretation

What do the results mean? What's the significance of the findings? What are possible explanations of the results? Interpretations go beyond the data to add context, determine meaning and tease out substantive significance based on deduction or inference.

3. Judgement

Values are added to analysis and interpretations. Determining merit or worth means resolving to what extent and in what ways the results are positive or negative. What is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, in the outcomes? Have standards of desirability been met?

Stakeholders need to decide the level at which the project is considered effective/good use of resources. For example if 55% of participants have learnt something during the project, could that be considered as high or low? Ineffective or effective use of resources? The level of impact the project aims to make has to be decided with the stakeholders.

4. Recommendations

The final step (if agreed to be undertaken) adds action to analysis, interpretation, and judgement. What should be done? What are the action implications of the findings? Only recommendations that follow from and are grounded in the data ought to be formulated.

Part 4 – Report On Your Findings

4.1 Reporting Evaluation Findings

Evaluation is only worthwhile if the findings are reported and utilised in an appropriate manner. The recommended structure for a report is:

1. **Executive Summary**
   Summarise the main points from the evaluation including findings and key recommendations.

2. **Introduction to Project**
   Give a full description of the initiative including the overall goal and the context in which it took place.

3. **Evaluation Methods**
   Give a full description of evaluation methods, the sample and explain how the data was gathered and analysed. Also, provide an explanation of the limitations of the evaluation.

4. **Findings**
   This section presents your results. Present quantitative data as tables, pie charts or graphs where appropriate. The interpretation of qualitative data will be presented in textual form. The use of quotes can illustrate the basis of your interpretation and provide valuable insights. The confidentiality of the participants should be respected.

5. **Summary**
   Reflect on the broader lessons from your evaluation, and conclude the study.

6. **Recommendations**
   Make recommendations on the basis of the findings. Recommendations identify what was successful and should be maintained or expanded, and where changes to initiatives seem necessary.

7. **Acknowledgments**
   Thank people who were involved in your evaluation.

8. **References**
   If you have you have used any literature in your evaluation, list any references in a style which enables a reader to follow up on them and is consistent.

9. **Appendices**
   You can include copies of your data collection tools, statistical data etc. that would interrupt the flow of the main report.

4.2 Sharing Evaluation Findings

To make full use of the evaluation findings, make plans for the following activities:

- Share findings with the rest of the GMFRS and partner agencies
- Inform funding sources about the accomplishments
- Use findings to make decisions about the future of the project
- Continue to use evaluation to improve the project and to monitor outcomes
- Continue to share information with stakeholders
- Assess project fit with other communities

Part Four

Further Reading

If you require more information about different types of evaluations, evaluation processes and/or data collections methods, some useful resources are listed below:

Evaluation

Patton, M. “Utilization Focused Evaluation” 3rd ed., 1997, California, Sage

Robson, C. “Small Scale Evaluation” 2000, London, Sage

Rossi et al, “Evaluation: a Systematic Approach” 7th ed., 2004, California, Sage

W.K. Kellogg Foundation - http://www.wkkf.org

Evaluation Trust - http://www.evaluationtrust.org/evaluation/evaluate

Research Methods

Robson, C. “Real Word Research” 2nd ed., 2002, Oxford, Blackwell

Bryman, A. “Social Research Methods”, 2008, Oxford, Oxford University Press


Emergency
Department
(A&E)
Ambulances
Only
AMBULANCE
POLICE

Appendices

Appendix A – Evaluation Summary

Project Planning Stage	Specify aims and objectives of planned activities	☐
Part 1	Decide to evaluate and develop an overall evaluation strategy, including purpose, timeline and budget for evaluation	☐

Before Evaluation	Develop a detailed evaluation plan	☐
Part 2, Part 3	Inform all necessary parties of the evaluation	☐
	Choose, develop and test data collection tools	☐

During Evaluation	Collect Data	☐

After Evaluation	Analyse data and interpret results	☐
Part 4	Write an evaluation report	☐
	Share findings with the rest of the organisation and stakeholders	☐
	Inform funding sources about your evaluation	☐
	Use findings to improve project	☐

Appendix B – Project Logic Model[13]

Project Aim:					
Inputs	**Outputs**		**Outcomes - Impact**		
What we invest:	**What we do:**	**Who we reach:**	**Short term:**	**Medium term:**	**Long term:**
Assumptions: (the belief you have about the project / the way you think the project will work)			**External Influencing Factors:**		

[13] University of Wisconsin Program Development and Evaluation 2002

Appendix C – Evaluation Plan

1. Evaluation Focus Area	2. Evaluation Question	3. Indicators	4. Method

Appendix D – Timetable for Evaluation

[Insert name of initiative]

Year

Task:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

Appendix E – Key Word Definitions

Aim

The ultimate goal(s) of the project. Answers the questions: “What is the project going to achieve?”

Anonymity

The participant should not be identifiable from any published materials. Participant’s personal details, including name, should not be shared with a third party.

Control Group

A group of people that is matched as closely as possible with participants, but who are not participating in the project, can be used to validate the changes that occur in the participant’s group as a consequence of the initiative.

Data Collection Tools / Research Methods

The tools that allow you carry out your research and to examine your evaluation topic, for example questionnaires, interviews, etc.

Hard Outcomes

Hard outcomes refer to the quantitative outcomes the initiatives aim to achieve. Hard outcomes often appear as numbers, statistics and percentages.

Objective

Objectives are the ways to achieve your aim(s), the activities needed to carry out to complete the task. Answers the questions: “How are you going to achieve the aim?”

Primary Research

Primary research (also called field research) involves the collection of data that does not already exist.

Qualitative Data

Non-numerical, in depth data, that investigates the why and how questions.

Quantitative Data

Numerical data or data that can be converted into numbers, and is measured as how many, how long how much, etc.

Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which a data collection tool yields the same result on repeated trials. In other words, will the tool provide the same answers even if it is administered at different times or by different people.

Sampling

Sampling is concerned with the number of participants taking part in the research.

Secondary Research

Data that has already been collected for another purpose.

Soft Outcomes

Soft outcomes are qualitative in nature, and difficult to quantify. Soft outcomes are often expressed in words and refer to non-tangible issues such as behaviour, awareness and attitudes.

Structured Interviews

The interviewer asks predetermined questions, exactly as they are written, in the same sequence and using the same style.

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple research methods. Evaluation designs should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods whenever possible.

Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects the specific concept that the evaluator is attempting to measure. i.e. “Does the measure really measure what it was set to measure?”