

Quick Guide:

Monitoring and Evaluation

The importance of the work you do and/or the value of the service you provide may seem completely obvious to you - of course it's necessary and important or you wouldn't be doing it. Unfortunately, if you rely on other people or organisations to provide you with the funds to do this work, you need to be able to demonstrate, with clear evidence, the difference you are making as a result of your activities – your 'impact' and how this is achieving your aims and objectives of your organisation.

Overview of some of the terms often used in monitoring and evaluation:

- **Monitoring** – basically numbers e.g. how many people came etc.
- **Evaluation** – looks at the success and failures and asks questions about how good your service is, and the difference it has made.
- **Inputs** - resources you put into a project or activity e.g. staff time, volunteers' time, equipment, expenditure and other assets.
- **Outputs:** the products or services an organisation delivers such as training courses, publications, a helpline, or a website.
- **Outcomes:** these are the changes or differences made as a result of the output.
- **Impact:** the benefits or changes (longer-term) that happen as a result of your work. E.g. obvious changes, such as someone being housed, and less obvious such as a shift in confidence or opinion. These might be harder to monitor on a routine basis.

Basic Principles

It's impossible and unnecessary to measure and assess everything you do, so it is important to think carefully about what information you actually need and why. Only collect data you will use and try and build its collection into your day-to-day activities – use photographs, details of who attended events, and ask for feedback from your clients/users when they use your service.

When evaluating your services, which should be done on a regular basis, you should involve all your stakeholders in the process so include your service users and partners for example and ensure you communicate the results back to them.

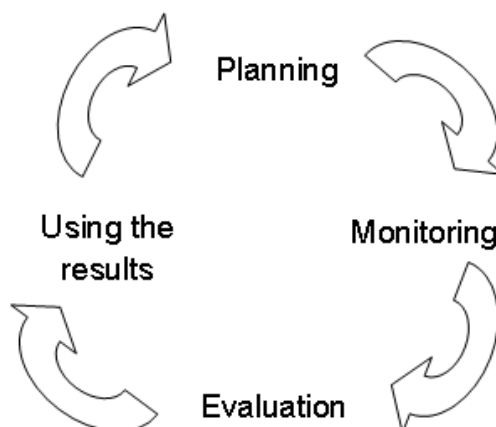
Get into the routine of collecting data and using it, however if funders are looking for specific information on your service then it is vital that this is the information you give them not what you think they want.

How good do you think your organisation is at monitoring and evaluating the services it provides? You can access a simple worksheet from the Voscur website (Bristol's agency that supports voluntary action) to check how well you are doing.

<http://www.supporthub.org.uk/sites/supporthub.org.uk/files/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20Assessment.pdf>

Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle

In simple terms, monitoring and evaluation can be thought of in four key phases:



Planning:

Considerations at this key stage could include why and who is the evaluation for, what data do you need and who is going to collect it.

Monitoring:

Looks at what to monitor and how to do it. At this point in the cycle, you should define your outputs, outcomes and impact(s). See the definitions of terms above.

Evaluation:

Is about using the data collected to make changes and improve your services. Data collected at the monitoring stage might raise additional questions that need to be answered at the evaluation stage. Extra time should be set aside to explore the additional questions and collect the appropriate information. Monitoring should be completed with the evaluation in mind.

Using the results:

Is focused on reviewing your services and developing them further. You should use the results to feed back into the planning and development of your services and can demonstrate the progress made by service users. You can also use the results to tell others about what you have learnt and share best practice.

A list of resources is available on the Full Guide version.

For more information or support monitoring and evaluation, or to have a look at the full range of information sheets available from Devon Voluntary Action (DeVA) visit http://www.devonva.org/information_and_guidance or contact DeVA on 0845 6099901 or by emailing support@devonva.org.