

The background of the entire page is a large, slightly blurred image of the European Union flag, featuring twelve yellow stars in a circle on a blue field. The flag is draped over a classical building facade with stone columns and arches.

# Building Better Opportunities Evaluation

Networking and Learning Event June 2018



# Welcome and Overview

# Introductions and Aims

- Introductions and housekeeping
- Event Aims:
  - Overview of national evaluation progress and findings
  - Share early delivery experiences and learning
  - Get to know other BBO projects
- Agenda/Structure
  - Presentations, networking and discussions

# Evaluation Overview

- Key themes for the BBO evaluation are **Access** and **Impact (outcomes/what works)**

- Evaluation questions focus on:

Access and barriers	Working with ESF
Partnership arrangements	Delivery arrangements
Profile of participants	Intervention approaches
Employer engagement	Outcomes
Sustainability	

- Strong emphasis on sharing learning on what is working well and why for particular groups, delivering in line with ESF rules and learning for BLF.

# Evaluation Update

Access evaluation activity has involved:

- **Scoping stage** – initial stakeholder and programme team interviews, review of application documentation, development of typologies and profiling of projects.
- **Grant holders and partner survey** – 271 respondents to online survey capturing additional profiling partnership info and knowledge of ESF requirements.
- **Unsuccessful applicant interviews** – 15 interviews with organisations unsuccessful at Stage 1 and 2.
- **Funding Officer focus groups** - to provide information on the application process.

# Evaluation Update

Examination of outcomes has involved:

- **Grant holder interviews:** 16 (of 30) telephone interviews, purposively sampled. Exploring challenges and successes so far and delivery to date.
- **In-depth qualitative research with projects:** Project visits to 2 (of 30) projects comprising qualitative interviews with management staff from lead and partners, operational staff and participants.
- **Capture of other sources of evidence:** local evaluation reports, case studies and outputs developed by individual projects, learning activities.
- **Forthcoming participant survey**

# Learning Activities



# Referral and engagement

- Mixed picture on progress with engagement some projects self reported being close to engagement targets but others some way behind.
- Some variation in success in engaging particular groups (women and economically inactive participants in particular have been slower to engage) with proactive action taken to address gaps.
- What works: *“What works best is having the range and the mix of referral routes and putting the time into it.”*

# What works

- **Building the brand and raising the profile locally**
  - Social media and Local press coverage
  - Resources e.g. brochures, leaflets
  - Joint working with other BBO projects
- **Maximising partnership expertise and networks**
  - ‘Piggyback’ on an existing community of service users
  - Utilising specialist skills e.g. languages
- **Building trusted relationships**

*“There's a trust element, they now trust that the project actually delivers. They will refer participants quite freely now to us.”*

- **Proactive engagement**

*“Whatever it is you are doing, actually going out there is important. You can't just sit and wait for people to come to you.”*



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# Challenges

- **Participants presenting with greater support needs** e.g. mental health issues, undisclosed disabilities.
- **Evidencing eligibility**
  - Access to ID document and difficulty evidencing economic inactivity
  - Resulted in elongated process and greater staff time inputs than anticipated
- **Complying with publicity requirements**
- **Inappropriate referrals**

# Partnership Management What Works

- Developing clear Partnership Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding that all partners sign up to
- Open, honest and effective communication, particularly from the lead partner
- Holding regular partnership meetings, along with encouraging relationships to develop across the partnership
- A strong focus on partnership management on the part of the lead provider
- Taking responsibility as a lead partner to seek to reduce the burdens on delivery partners where possible and appropriate
- Developing effective cross referral processes between partners and encouraging this as part of a 'collegiate' approach to delivery

# Partnership Approaches

- Despite positive picture, and good evidence base on success factors and effective practices, some challenges have emerged:
  - Some partnership ‘churn’ with partners dropping out (can be positive as well as negative from a whole project perspective)
  - Administrative requirements and lower than anticipated engagement numbers key factors in partners leaving projects (particular effects on smaller and specialist providers)
- Pro-active partnership management supported by effective processes central to addressing the challenges emerging

# Intervention Approaches

Principles or common elements underpinning the effective delivery of BBO projects to date include:

- **Comprehensive but carefully delivered needs assessment and action planning**
- **Addressing initial confidence and self-belief barriers at an early stage**
- **Having a single key worker or advisor dedicated to an individual participant**
- **Offering flexible and individualised support**

# Outcomes and Results

- **Positive view that there is a focus on participant outcomes:**
  - Allowing focus on the “underlying stuff” which are fundamental and important for sustainable outcomes is welcome

*“That's what's really quite exciting about delivering ESF with the Lottery because of those outcomes. You really feel that you're not just ticking those boxes, you're actually really trying to change things sustainably.  
(Project manager)”*

- **Less positive picture at this stage in relation to progress with results targets with challenges in relation to:**
  - Judging when to exit/claim a result for a participant
  - Providing the required evidence of results for participants within the timescales allowed
- **Strong individual participant success stories emerging**

# Wider Outcomes

- **Organisation level outcomes highlighted:**

- Strengthened partnership working:

*“That's one of the things that we actively encourage is our partners to talk to each other, which is then setting up partnerships for the future.”*

- Organisational capacity building through process support, sharing best practice and cross partnership internal staff training

- **Local area outcomes:**

- Community facility enhancements
- Filling gaps in local provision
- Wider partnership links

*“We're seeing results, we're seeing impact already, we love what it's brought into our area, we love what it's brought to our sector, but boy, it's hard.”*



# Evaluation Next Steps

## Evaluation Activities

- Project interviews and visits
- Participant survey
- Grant holder and partner survey

## Learning Activities

- Report disseminated at:  
[www.buildingbetteropportunities.org.uk](http://www.buildingbetteropportunities.org.uk)
- Cycle of thematic learning – Discussions, webinars, workshops, materials
- Online Yammer community
- Ad hoc requests

Contact us:

[BBO@ecorys.com](mailto:BBO@ecorys.com)

# Sharing Learning

# Sharing Learning 1

Q 1) In your discussion groups each participant to share for their project either:

- What has been a recent success for your project?

**Or:**

- What is a key current delivery challenge for your project?

*After hearing from individuals about challenges, do you have solutions or advice to offer the project?*

# Sharing Learning 2

Q2) Reflecting on the national evaluation findings:

- What referral/engagement approaches have worked best for your projects/target groups?
- Do you recognise the common principles for effective delivery? Are there any others? Will they change?
- How is your project doing in respect of outcomes and results?

Q3) Are there any other issues or experiences you would like to share with other BBO projects?

# Thank you for coming...

- To access the Yammer network contact us:  
[BBO@ecorys.com](mailto:BBO@ecorys.com)
- Check the website for materials and reports:  
[www.buildingbetteropportunities.org.uk](http://www.buildingbetteropportunities.org.uk)
- Send us your local evaluation reports and case studies