

Learning Round Up - BBO Grant holder Learning and Networking Events Nov-Dec 2018

A further series of six learning and networking events were held across the country in November and December 2018, providing the opportunity for BBO grant holders to come together. Through presentations and discussions, experiences and learning was shared between participants. The main ideas and learning that arose from the events are summarised below:

1. Cross Cutting Themes are important

A presentation by Tim Birch, The National Lottery Community Fund reminded projects that the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs) of Sustainability and Equal Opportunities are important for delivery of BBO projects. Specifically that projects are required to:

- Have a **policy** or written commitments, for each theme.
- Have a **plan** outlining how the project will take action or implement activity to respond to the themes.
- Demonstrate **proof** or evidence that they are measuring and making progress against the activity outlined.

The key message was that the plan and measurement can be relatively simple and realistic but they are important as they are subject to audit. Projects reported differing experiences as to how much emphasis audit visits have placed on CCT. For one project a 1hr session early on in the audit focused on CCT, while another project had a differing experience with much less emphasis.

Projects shared effective practice on how to ensure the whole partnership focused on CCTs:

- One project suggests that having partner level plans has worked best for them as the plans are able to respond to the partners specific approaches or delivery contexts rather than making a one size fits all plan to cover the whole partnership.
- Having CCTs as a standard agenda at partnership meetings has kept it on the agenda.
- For another project, CCT is flagged in their weekly newsletters to partners and picked up in their annual survey.
- One project has formed a sub-group on demographics to allow the partnership to review activity for particular equalities groups.

Beyond this projects shared examples of how they seek to integrate CCT into their delivery and the particular actions they are pursuing and measuring.

- The [GEM project](#) in Gloucestershire has engaged the services of a Green Impact organisation. They used a toolkit to review project activity and have inputted to CCT plans for the project.
- Other projects are similarly using freely available carbon calculators to measure and record their sustainability.

A top tip was to remember to capture CCTs achievements and impact, especially the things you do without realising.

- Many projects are recording miles saved on car sharing or use of teleconference/webinar software rather than travelling.
- In Herts they have sought to raise awareness amongst participants through 'Art to Sustainability.' This was a competition for participants to produce artwork showing what environmental sustainability means to them. The art was collated into a book and a celebration event held.

A number of challenges were recognised, particularly for some projects being realistic about what can be done under sustainable development. For example, cycling instead of car use is not realistic on a disability focused project and similarly car sharing for London projects is not so relevant given the predominant use of public transport. Seeking to go paperless can also contradict with the need for key documents to be printed or to have a paper trail for audit purposes.

2. Employer engagement

There was further discussion on various aspects of employer engagement and/or progressing participants once they are closer to being job ready and some good examples of employer engagement and employability work were shared.

- [Activate Learning](#) run sector based academies and can run bespoke training with employers e.g. if aware that a hospital has a number of particular vacancies e.g. porters they will run a two week training course to prepare candidates for the role. Participants who complete the course are then guaranteed an interview.
- Groundwork London's [Able, Capable, Employed project](#) use an employer subsidy as a core element of their Intermediate Labour Market model but this is claimed back at the end of the ILM not provided up front. This minimises the risk that the employer will turn round at the end and say they can't afford to keep participant – they have been paying the wages from the start.
- The [Building Bridges](#) project has developed a number of employment pathways involving a taster session, training, and work experience then links into agencies who have access to the jobs. They also offer 'Sponsored employment' where the project pays people a living wage to get work experience. This is not counted as a result, the exit result is claimed when a participant moves into another job, which they are more likely to get now that they have had some real experience of the responsibility of work and experience of a wage.
- Several projects have taken action to change employer perceptions. Building Bridges held an employer event with the local MP on addressing employer perceptions and conduct regular employer perceptions surveys. The Who Dares Works project supported participants to make a film – Give us a Go

3. Sporadic involvement is a challenge

Projects reported to have experienced sporadic involvement from some participants once they have engaged initially. There are also examples of participants who have disengaged after a period of engagement. This was reported in some cases to be due to summer holidays where people had childcare responsibilities. For others, they were just not in a place to be able to engage properly or a crisis arises that means they drop off radar for 5-6 weeks. Projects have



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reported that they try to keep in touch and reassure participants that once they are ready support is available.

4. Targeted engagement

There was much discussion on engagement of some specific target groups.

Isolated young people, particularly those who live in rural areas is a current focus for several projects. Across many projects, the 15-18 age group has been found to be particularly challenging to engage, with many young people far off being able to engage in a group setting. Projects are doing much more 1:1 work as a result.

- The [Empowering Enterprise](#) project are just beginning some social sustainability evaluation work to explore what works to engage socially isolated young people. They hope to find out how to engage geographically dispersed young people and what online solutions could be used. The project is planning a 'social fair' to attract young people to come and find out about activities, groups or things they can get involved in as a first step towards potentially thinking about employment.
- The [Game Changer](#) project has found that physically collecting young people works give transport issues etc. but this is time consuming. Putting on workshops with a creative industry partner (e.g. writing, sketchbook or digital) helps interest young people

Where engagement of women is being sought, marketing materials and social media have used pictures of women and stories about women to enhance marketing. In one project a childcare partner has brought on board to provide childcare at engagement or initial training events to allow women to engage. Another project has used a children's clothing bank as an engagement tool. It visits nurseries, children's centres etc. and offers free bundles of children's clothes. While using this project staff tell people about the project.

There is much still to learn from BBO delivery, but these events made an important contribution to ensuring knowledge is shared and developed – thank you to all who attended.

There was a clear message in the feedback forms that more of this type of event, which brings together grant holders, would be welcomed. Look out for more of the same in 2019.

The specific presentations delivered at the individual events are available on the [BBO evaluation website](#).

For further information on the evaluation please contact: BBO@ecorys.com