

A **Good Practice Guide for Practitioners** has been developed through the evaluation of the Fund. The Guide provides funders, commissioners and service providers with steps and considerations in project design and delivery, learning from Innovation Projects.

This help sheet summarises the good practice identified in the Guide to help you find the information you need.

Good Practice Guide: A Summary

Page 1

Project Design

Key factors to consider in the design phase to ensure successful delivery

- How to identify genuine unmet need
- Ways to avoid duplicating other services

Experience of Innovation projects shows that spending more time at the scoping stage will pay dividends in delivery. Where Innovation projects under-invested in scoping work the approach often had to be changed or didn't work as well.

Pathways to success:

- Scoping work
Look for evidence and advice; Talk to your target group
- Mapping existing services
Contact other service providers and strategic bodies with an overview of local need and existing services
- Testing your approach
- Being honest about and planning for potential risk
Have a 'Plan B'; Make room for review during delivery
- Devoting time to scoping and design phase
- Identifying partners
Who could refer clients to you? Are there partners who can deliver part of the service?

Good Practice: Responsive to need

The Future Melting Pot used young people's focus groups during their scoping phase. This revealed an unmet need for young people wanting to become self-employed, which led to the development of the *Youth Employment & Enterprise Rehearsal* project.

Good Practice: What's already out there?

Crisis Skylight actively liaised with other services working with homeless people. This avoided duplication when developing *SmartSkills* and resulted in useful partnership links for referrals into the project.

Engagement

Ensuring services reach their target audience

- Developing your beneficiary engagement approach
- Potential engagement methods
- Maximising participation in your project

Finding effective ways to reach out to vulnerable or socially isolated clients is often critical to success.

Some Innovation projects established formal referral partnerships that worked effectively. Others met clients where they were: in 'Places of Trust'.

Pathways to success:

- Thinking about what your target group need
How can the people you want to help be best engaged?
- Formal/Informal referral agreements?
Consider the right approach for your project
- Outreaching in ways your clients will respond to
- Devoting time and resources to recruiting clients
It often takes longer than you think
- Identifying partners
Promote your service to agencies already in contact with your client group
- Avoiding untargeted outreach approaches
Leafleting/door knocking can be resource intensive yet yield limited results

Good Practice: Find your clients where they are

Improving Chances and *Building Successful Families* targeted vulnerable families. They created partnerships with schools through parent liaison workers to engage parents in a place they already used and trusted.

Good Practice: What's a "Place of Trust"?

Familiarity: a place/service they, or someone they know already use

Community profile: in their community or has a positive profile

Safety: a place you can ensure confidentiality

For them: a place they can meet like minded people, or is perceived to be used by 'people like them'

The Innovation Fund Programme Evaluation and Good Practice Guide for Practitioners was conducted by **ekosgen** in conjunction with the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University.

Good Practice Guide: A Summary

Page 2

Meeting Beneficiary Needs

Meeting needs to make delivery effective:

- Addressing barriers
- Motivating and supporting clients
- Easing concerns and support with health conditions
- Methods of communication

Innovation projects trialled a wide variety of activities to meet the needs of clients. The most successful approaches were consistently those which tailored their work to individuals they engaged.

Pathways to success:

- Identifying and planning for barriers from the outset
- Being realistic about what you can't do
Can you partner with others to meet these needs?
- Revising delivery to accommodate emerging issues
- Keeping in touch with clients
Texting and social network sites may work well for some
- Persevering
Prepare an approach for re-engaging those who drop out



Nurture vs Challenge: Where is the balance?

Challenge to work can be a strong driver for some clients, for others it can be counter-productive if other issues need to be addressed first. There is always a need for nurture and challenge, but a continuum exists between the two.

Timing: Challenge should be introduced at an appropriate time based client need and how work ready they are.

Balance: Balance can depend on work-readiness and work opportunities. Balance should shift towards challenge for individuals as they progress towards work.

Towards nurture: Crisis SmartSkills Supports homeless people in achieving more independence and gaining confidence. Skills like handling money, managing time, self-presentation and healthy food: foundations for moving into the world of work, allowing challenge to be introduced as independence increases.

Towards challenge: Innovative Jobs Academy Focus Enterprises, uses motivational mapping to identify strengths and job aspirations encouraging clients to take responsibility for goals, balanced with a supportive coaching relationship.

Delivery

Factors that contribute to successful delivery of services

- What to think about when choosing venues
- The 'package' of services to offer
- Importance and characteristics of good quality staff
- How to set up effective partnerships

Having a good project idea that addresses a genuine need is not enough to ensure success. Effective delivery depends on all the right ingredients being in place. Innovation projects that have been responsive to delivery needs have been successful. There are also examples of building excellent delivery partnerships.

Pathways to success:

- Choosing the right venue
Appropriate for your activity; Place of trust; Consistent
- Reviewing performance and adapting delivery
Regular internal evaluation and review; Flexibility
- The right staff in the right place
Capacity to build trust and rapport; Able to identify with clients; Flexible and responsive
- The right partnerships
Referral or delivery? Different but complementary expertise; Consider formalising partnership structures

Good Practice: Benefits of embedding staff

The co-location of staff from the Citizens' Advice Bureau with the Working Age Dementia Service provided an integrated and coordinated package of support for patients with early onset dementia and their carers.

Good Practice: Social housing provider partnership

Trident Housing Association provided an empty shop unit as a partner in the *Art Work Gallery & Café* project. Their motivation for involvement was a shared objective to support clients with mental health and learning difficulties and to revitalise a largely vacant row of shops.

Good Practice Guide: A Summary

Page 3

Further information

For more information on the WNF Innovation Fund or a copy of the full Good Practice Guide and Innovation Fund Programme Evaluation please contact:
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Employer Engagement

Key steps to engaging employers to provide work experience, apprenticeships, employment opportunities.

- Incentivising employers to participate
- Making links with the private sector
- Benefits of working with a single sector
- Communicating clearly and effectively

Innovation projects involving employers have found working closely with them increases the success of placements and the quality of the employer experience.

Pathways to success:

- Making links with employers
Could they provide a route into work for clients who might struggle in the 'open market'?
- Considering how to find and approach employers
Representative bodies, employer networks
- Identifying the benefits you can 'sell' to employers
Supporting recruitment; contributing to CSR;
- Considering work with a specific industry sector

Good Practice: Understanding employer needs

Take time to understand the **needs and requirements** of employers. **Provide incentives:** easier recruitment, candidate screening and cost saving are attractive
Communicate clearly and respond quickly

Good Practice: Getting Ready for Work step by step

Business in the Community combined introductory 'Behind the Scenes' days, where clients got a taste of how a company works, with two week placements, clearly defining a role for workplace 'buddies'.

Good Practice: Boosting sector skills

The *Jewellery Quarter Pre-Apprenticeship Scheme* identified a skills gap in the jewellery manufacturing trade. They developed an on-the-job training initiative that responded directly to the needs of those employers.

Achieving Sustainability

How projects can sustain themselves:

- Using evaluation to support funding bids
- Mainstreaming services
- Ways to generate income
- Developing sustainable 'products'

Innovation pilots are now considering options for future sustainability of successful approaches. A number of projects have developed options for sustainability through delivery of their pilot.

Changes in funding landscape show a shift towards negotiating subcontracting and partnership arrangements.

Pathways to success:

- Considering how to factor sustainability into project design
- Exploring potential future funding through subcontracting and partnerships
European Social Fund, Work Programme; Consider a consortium approach
- Capturing learning and success in evaluations
Strengthens funding bids and develops your approach
- Promoting approaches with 'mainstream' potential
- Reducing dependency on short term funding
Generating income by selling a 'product' or service

Good Practice: Generating income

UK Asian Women's Centre's *Sprouting Hidden Talent*:
 Makes and sells lunches to local schools and community centres through fledgling social enterprise 'Mama Tiffin'.

The *Art Work Gallery & Café*:
 Generates income with a public café service, sale of artwork and venue hire.

The *Jewellery Quarter Pre-Apprenticeship Scheme*:
 Developing a 'product': a work-based NVQ with potential to be incorporated into a future industry apprenticeship.