

How do we know if the sessions are working well?



This question is important because...

You need to keep an eye on how your sessions are going so you can either repeat your successes or improve things if necessary. You might also identify some unexpected outcomes. Even if there are any problems, you are unlikely to get a negative reputation (which can be hard to reverse) if you respond quickly.



Key messages

- ✓ Have a quick look through the information you've been gathering. Are there any themes (positive or negative) emerging – particularly in relation to your planned outcomes? Are people starting to move towards achieving their goals?
- ✓ Ask everyone involved how they think the sessions are going. Consider including participants, volunteers, staff, carers and referrers. Make it simple for people to give you feedback – anonymously if preferred.
- ✓ Don't assume that everything is perfect just because your sessions are always full. Your programme could be the only thing available for people – better than nothing but not really meeting the needs of the participants!
- ✓ Try to get a sense of whether most participants stay engaged with the programme or just come along a couple of times. If some people are leaving, try to work out whether those particular individuals have anything in common. Is there something about your programme that is problematic for them? For example:
 - Are some people being referred inappropriately? If so, is it often by the same person or organisation?



How do we know if the sessions are working well? (continued)



- Are your sessions too challenging or not challenging enough? Can your programme accommodate a range of abilities?
- Is there a welcoming and positive atmosphere for everyone at the sessions or do some people feel left out socially?
- Are sessions being held in the right place and at the right time of day or do these practicalities make it more difficult for some people to come along?