



Service Evaluation Processes and Liabilities: A Commissioner's Perspective.

Irish Evaluation Network, 6th November 2015.

The **A**rea **B**ased **C**hildhood Programme 2013–2017



Overview

- ▶ Introduction to CDI;
- ▶ CDI's Commissioned Research to date;
- ▶ The Commissioning Process;
- ▶ Reviewing interim and final reports;
- ▶ Dissemination Processes;
- ▶ Liabilities;
- ▶ Questions?



Introduction to CDI

2004-2007:

- ▶ Community activity and concern re: outcomes for children;
- ▶ Local audits, needs assessments, service gaps;
- ▶ Atlantic Philanthropies strategic move to include non-third level investment;
- ▶ Government recognition of need for dedicated focus on children.



Agreement that

Something
needs to
change!



CDI: Initial Phase

2007-2012:

- ▶ Establishment of an organisation, governance structures, staffing etc.;
- ▶ Service design based on agreed priorities;
- ▶ Commissioning of 30 service providers and 8 evaluation teams;
- ▶ Delivery of services to 5,000 children and families in Tallaght West;
- ▶ Completion of eight independent evaluations;
- ▶ Commencement of dissemination process.



CDI Research

3 Randomised
Controlled Trials



ECCE – (DIT)

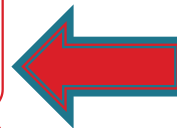
Doodle Den – (QUB)

Mate Tricks – (QUB)

Community Safety Initiative –
(NUIG)

Restorative Practice – (NUIG)

Overall Process Evaluation –
(NUIG)



3 Process
Evaluations

Quasi-Experimental
Study



Healthy School's
Programme – (TCD)

Retrospective
Impact Study



Speech &
Language Therapy

Subsequent and Ongoing Independent Research

SLT:

Comparison Study of CDI and HSE Services

Family Literacy:

- Iterative Review;
- Pilot Process Evaluation;
- Quasi-Experimental Study.

Ante-Natal to Three Initiative:

- Baseline audit re: interagency links;
- Evaluation of service outcomes.

Longitudinal Study of Doodle Den

Family Links Prison Programme:
UL iterative evaluation.

Community Safety:

Evaluation of RAPID role and mainstreaming.

The Commissioning Process

Procurement Requirements for Publicly funded research:

Depending on value of the contract:

- Three verbal quotes;
- Three written quotes;
- Closed competitive tender;
- Open competitive tender;
- www.tenders.ie;
- www.tenders.eu.



What we do in CDI

- Identify the need for research/evaluation;
- Consider the key research questions, based on our logic model;
- Consider appropriate methodology;
- Identify and ring-fence appropriate budget;
- Draft a Request for Tender document for Board approval;
- Commence procurement of researcher(s).



To date:

- We have commissioned research to the value of approximately €2m;
- We have national and international expertise to support our work;
- Our level of exposure to, and experience in, research and evaluation, is unique in the Community and Voluntary sector.



Questions to be considered when drafting an RFT

- How clear is the intervention?
- Have SMART outcomes been identified? (logic model)
- How clear and appropriate are the research questions?
- How fixed or flexible is the methodology?
- What level of organisational readiness is there for this process?
- Who owns the research?



Reviewing an RFT Submission

- Score sheets;
- Explicit relevant experience;
- Well written and succinct;
- Realistic timelines and costs;
- Openness to working things through with us.



Review Processes:

- Scheduled progress meetings to trouble shoot and maintain momentum;
- Regular dialogue to promote collaboration;
- Agreed milestones, targets and timelines.



Liabilities:

- Contractual clarity re: IPR;
- Evaluation team participation in reflection group process;
- Management of contentious issues (weighting of views);
- Quality re: qualitative vs quantitative;
- Quality of writing/proof reading;
- Managing negative findings.



Challenges:

- Coordinating multiple evaluations – e.g. timing of fieldwork in schools; families involved in multiple programmes; sufficient resources to review and approve document;
- TW is a research “haven”;
- Are we a producer or consumer of evidence?
- Are we a community based organisation or a research unit?
- Is our priority quality research or meeting needs?
- Engaging policy makers in the absence of evaluation findings.



De-commissioning services:

- Even with hard evidence, its difficult to get people to let go;
- This is an emotional process – expect tears!
- Map your stakeholders;
- Sequence your engagement with them;
- This is a partnership between the evaluation team and the commissioner;
- Be gentle!

Dissemination

CDI owns the research data, so leads this process. However, researchers are encouraged to publish.

Methods Include:

- Reflection meetings;
- Published reports;
- Policy papers;
- Conference presentations;
- Family and children focused events;
- Media – print and radio;
- Oireachtas Committee presentations;
- One-to-one meetings and presentations at key policy making structures.



Any
Questions?



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