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Introduction to the toolkit

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Answering
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This toolkit was funded by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (WYVRP) and has been created by Ecorys, an independent research and evaluation organisation. The toolkit aims to equip those delivering interventions in West Yorkshire to contribute to an evidence base on what works in preventing and reducing violent crime. It gives partners the building blocks to create Theories of Change for projects which, in turn, support the creation of robust monitoring systems and evaluation techniques.

The toolkit was written by George Horton, Maya Hill-Newell, Tave Browett, and Kate Smith at Ecorys. The authors would like to thank the Knowledge Hub team at WYVRP, and the partners who contributed to consultations and discussions in the development process.

Why is monitoring and evaluation important?

Understanding what works well and what doesn't is vital for publicly funded interventions, and particularly so when those interventions are designed to support some of the most vulnerable people in society. Effective monitoring can help organisations to refine their interventions as they are being delivered to get the maximum impact for service users.

It's important that innovative approaches are evaluated so they can help shape future funding approaches and policy, and so we can do more of what works. Having a strong evidence base around what you did well is also really helpful for securing your own future funding and demonstrating your value.

Finally, we understand that resources can be tight for evaluation. As a result, it's really important to make sure that you're focused on what you need to know as early as possible; this toolkit can help you to pinpoint what you need to evidence, and how to collect and use the data effectively.

Using the toolkit

This toolkit contains advice and resources for practical approaches to embedding a culture of learning in your organisation. You'll find most benefit from reading it as a complete document, even if your organisation already has a Theory of Change, or already evaluates projects. It is based around best practice, so may give you some ideas for tweaking or adjusting your approaches. However, if you do need to dip in and out of the document to find guidance on specific aspects of Theory of Change and evaluation, then each section can work in a standalone way.

The document is not just aimed at those carrying out evaluation. It is also helpful for frontline staff (who may not usually be involved in Theory of Change or evaluation) to support learning approaches being embedded in day-to-day delivery.

