

FUNDRAISING - EVIDENCING NEED AND DEFINING OUTCOMES

Most funders will expect you to address the question of how you know there is a need or demand for your services. ‘Evidencing need’ basically means being able to show or prove that what you do is needed. Inadequate evidencing of need is one of the main reasons that funding applications fail. The National Lottery Community Fund defines need as ‘the term we use to describe a problem, or a situation where something needs to change to make things better’.

‘Outcomes’ are simply the things that will happen or change as a result of your work or your project. The National Lottery Community Fund defines outcomes as ‘the changes that your project can make over time to address the need(s) you have identified.’

Evidencing Need: How do you prove demand?

It is becoming increasingly important to be able to prove that what you are doing or what you want to do is needed. Funders want to see their money put to good use and that generally means they want to see positive results happen because of their grants or funding. Being able to prove that there is a demand for your work or project is therefore vitally important.

Before you start, ask yourself:

- What are the difficulties for the people in my community / your target group of beneficiaries?
- Why do people face these difficulties?
- What is the impact of these difficulties?

These are the things that should be emphasised to the funder. The need for your project should relate to the needs of people or communities as opposed to why you want to run the service.

Explain what you already know:

It could be that you are trying to get long-term support for an existing project or that you already have experience of work or projects within your field. Do you have waiting lists? What does your monitoring and evaluation tell you? Use this information to evidence your need.



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Anecdotal evidence and letters of support

You could provide case studies of service users you have helped. You could also include letters of support from service users and other agencies you work with who can support your application.

Consultations

Carry out door-to-door surveys or online questionnaires, interviews or focus groups and tweak your project based on the results. This is almost like carrying out market research to prove that a need exists for the service or project you want to provide.

Defining project aims and outcomes

When dealing with funders, it is important that you can clearly state the overall aim of your project and identify a set of outcomes that relate to it. This way the impact of your project can be measured. Your overall aim should, in one or two sentences, communicate the main purpose of your project and sum up the change you will make. Make it simple and straightforward and make sure it's achievable over the course of the project.

Examples of aims

- To deliver a range of services which will improve the quality of life of older isolated people in [location name]
- To provide a modern community facility that will offer activities, services and community space to engage local residents in active citizenship
- To improve the financial health and wellbeing of people on low incomes by providing access to money management, advice, training, and good quality welfare rights-based advice.

Your intended outcomes are the specific things you want to achieve and the differences you want to make for your beneficiaries by the time the project comes to an end.

How you tackle this will depend on the funder you are applying to, but it's always useful to identify a few outcomes because these give you something to measure your project against. Also once you start to monitor these outcomes you will then be able to report your progress to trustees and other funders.



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Again, depending on the funder, an outcome could consist of several component parts, for example:

- A number (such as 10; 100; 1000 people reached): whatever it is, make sure its accurate and achievable, don't pick random numbers out of the air
- A beneficiary: the description of a person or place that will be helped or provided with the service
- A benefit/change: improved skills, increased confidence, improved physical wellbeing
- An activity: workshop, training, social activity
- A timescale: for example, in six months, in the first year, by the end of the project.

So, examples of outcomes using the above guide might look like this:

- 25 elderly people will improve their physical and mental health by taking part in a series of intergenerational activities over a six month period
- 200 residents feel less isolated and report an improved sense of wellbeing through engagement in new community activities by the end of the project.

Tips on writing outcomes

- It's important when defining your outcomes to make sure the numbers and timescales are realistic.
- As a measure, divide the total number of people by the number of weeks the project will last. This will give you an indication of the number of people per week you will need to reach.
- Use words such as 'improved', 'decreased,' 'reduced,' 'better', 'healthier' and 'enhanced' to describe the change or difference the project will make.
- Don't be too concerned about creating lots of outcomes, sometimes one or two can be enough (for example, The National Lottery Community Fund asks for up to four).



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Additional Support

Community First Yorkshire can help you choose the funding that is right for you. We can support you on a one to one or group training basis by helping you to develop your project, research the right funder, plan a funding strategy, and give you advice about any funding applications you would like to submit.

Simply fill in an [enquiry form](#) and we'll get back to you.

Community First Yorkshire Funding Portal

Our Funding Portal is an innovative online platform that transforms the way VCSE organisations in North Yorkshire can search for and find the funding options they need.

Offering a one-stop-shop approach, the portal is not only free to users, it saves a stack of time allowing you to set up and save tailored searches, with results delivered straight to your inbox.

Register on our funding portal [here](#) today.

Plus, our Community Support North Yorkshire team can work alongside you to understand your grant funding needs, check you are eligible and be a 'critical friend' during the application process. And, because we're funded by North Yorkshire Council and NHS North Yorkshire, our support is free to VCSE organisations across the county!

You can sign up for our news bulletins [here](#).

- Our monthly Funding Bulletin lists updated funding opportunities.
- Our weekly newsletter has information about the volunteer and charity sector, including training courses about funding.



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