JOINING THE DOTS

A LEARNING TOOL | Supporting a Collaborative Approach to Learning and Development Activities
Contents

Background and purpose of the tool 03

Step 1 | Understanding the ‘why’ 04

Step 2 | ‘Who’: Engaging with relevant stakeholders 05

Step 3 | ‘What’: Developing the project programme 06
  - Scoping phase of the project 06
  - Developing a working agreement 08
  - Developing the training programme 10
  - Evaluation and further development 11
Background and purpose of this tool

Between 2014 and 2017, members of the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum (CJVSF) developed a collaborative training programme. This involved contributions from a range of CJVSF members and partner organisations.

This resource draws on the learning from the project to date, to share practical tools that can support others to take a collaborative approach to learning and development activities. It is structured around 3 basic steps:

**WHY?** Members wanted to be clear about the need to identify the problem they were trying to solve for clarity of purpose from the outset.

**WHO?** The importance of identifying and then engaging with relevant stakeholders that can help you achieve your outcomes.

**WHAT?** Mapping, scoping, planning, working agreements and evaluation.

The collaborative training and development programme was undertaken by the Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum using funding from The Robertson Trust and in-kind support from CJVSF members. We are grateful to them all for their time, enthusiasm and constructive contributions.

This toolkit was developed thanks to funding from the Workforce Development Network (WDN). The WDN is funded by the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor and the Scottish Social Services Council to support voluntary sector providers with policy, legislation and developments impacting on their workforce.
For the CJVSF piece of work there were three main drivers:

- A desire for a stronger workforce to help improve outcomes for people using services
- A desire to promote the value and competencies of the third sector
- Cost being a barrier for member organisations to access training and a recognition of the value of pooling resources

Being clear about why members wanted to undertake this piece of work was essential for providing a clear focus to the training programme. The following questions can be used to help prompt discussion amongst interested parties about why they may wish to consider collaborating on learning and development activities.

**WHY?**

- What would be the purpose of collaborating on learning and development activities?
- What challenges do you anticipate?
- What do you see as the driver for this piece of work?
- What benefits are there likely to be for a) the organisations and b) the individuals involved?
Engaging with relevant stakeholders

Before starting to develop the programme, it will be helpful to consider who you are intending to offer the training to, and who else may be interested in the project – and / or able to support its delivery. Identifying potential stakeholders early can help to make the design phase easier by ensuring that they are actively involved in the development of the project.
Developing the Project Programme

You’ll want to ensure your proposed activities don’t duplicate what is already available. The CJVSF members undertook a double mapping exercise – partially looking at what would be useful (identified needs within their organisation) and what existing resources / training they were aware of that may assist with addressing the need. Collating this information across all the different partners that were involved in developing the project helped to build a clear picture of common needs and a catalogue of existing provision. In a number of cases, this enabled organisations to identify new resources / training activities that they had not been previously aware of. The group designed a template that offers one example of how you could capture the information. Feel free to adapt it to suit your own needs.

You can download an editable version of this template [here](#).

Scoping phase | When they had completed the mapping exercise individually, we were able to collate the results to prompt a discussion. The following questions may prove helpful for identifying next steps and potential for collaboration.

- **Have you identified training/resources you haven’t come across before and want more info about?**
- **Where are the areas of common interest?**
- **If a collaborative project were to be developed, based on the mapping results, what would its purpose be?**
- **What gaps currently exist in training and development activities?**
Developing a working agreement

“In delivering training together, we learned how similar our values are and this opened up opportunities for further collaboration.”

CJVSF Member
Developing a working agreement at an early stage in the project can help to set expectations and provide a foundation for strengthening relationships between the different partners involved. The exercise of developing a working agreement can, in itself, be useful for prompting discussion and debate amongst partners and for helping to develop trust and understanding of each other’s roles, needs and expectations.

Opposite we have included some of the types of questions that the members found useful for helping them to develop their own working agreement. They opted to develop two agreements for:

1. Participants of the training who would be asked to sign up to before attending the training  
2. The organisations involved in developing and delivering the training

Examples of these are on the next page...
Examples of working agreements...

WORKING AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

By agreeing to work in this collaborative learning programme I will:

- Seek to work positively and productively with other participants
- Agree to respect the intellectual property of other organisations. Where resources and training content have been shared through the programme, I will not copy or distribute these or use them for commercial gain without the owner’s consent.
- Support the evaluation of the programme. After each session, both attendees and session leads will be invited to provide feedback on the learning activity. The results of the feedback will be collated by [ ] and shared with all those involved in the programme to help inform any future development of shared learning activities.
- Provide advance notice of cancellations wherever reasonably possible.

ORGANISATION WORKING AGREEMENT

By agreeing to work in this collaborative learning programme we will:

- Work positively and productively with other organisations contributing to the programme
- Encourage and support our staff to attend learning events offered by other partners
- Agree to respect the intellectual property of other organisations. Where resources and training content have been shared through the programme, we will not copy or distribute these or use them for commercial gain without the owner’s consent.
- Support the evaluation of the programme. After each session, both attendees and session leads will be invited to provide feedback on the learning activity. The results of the feedback will be collated by [ ] and shared with all those involved in the programme to help inform any future development of shared learning activities.
- Consider the suitability of participants we forward for each learning session and target learning opportunities appropriately.
- Provide advance notice of cancellations wherever reasonably possible
- Agree to a fair allocation of spaces across the participating organisations.
Developing the training programme

Developing the structure and content of the training programme is likely to be an iterative process. Opposite we have included a note of the questions that members worked through when developing their collaborative training programme.

An editable version of the template they used for developing the training modules can be downloaded here.
Evaluation, learning and improving

Evaluating the programme is important for understanding how well it worked and where future improvements and developments could be made. There are many different evaluation tools and approaches that can be used to support you with this. Opposite we have included the questions that CJVSF members were keen for their evaluation to answer. The evaluation tool that members used for the programme was based on four simple elements:

1. Learning
   - What has been most useful for you today?
   - What have you learnt?
2. Next steps
   - How do you intend to apply the learning from today?
   - What will you do differently?
3. Outcomes
   - How will you know your practice is changed?
   - What difference will it make?
4. Areas of future interest
   - What would you identify as your ongoing learning and development needs?

A copy of the evaluation tool we used with instructions can be downloaded [here](www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk).

Further examples of evaluation methods and tools can be found at [www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk](http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk).
The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum (CJVSF):

**Supports** third sector providers to continuously improve their own criminal justice services through collaboration and sharing of good practice.

**Assists** third sector providers to understand, navigate and influence the complex and changing environment in which they operate.

**Promotes** broader awareness of the activities, value and impact of third sector services within criminal justice.

The CJVSF is hosted by the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS). Further details about the Forum can be found at: [www.ccppscotland.org/cjvsf](http://www.ccppscotland.org/cjvsf)

CCPS is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 279913. Registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SCO29199. The company’s registered office is at Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY

Document designed by Emma Liddell emma_liddell@yahoo.com

Images: Front cover: Patrick Fore on Unsplash Page 7 Desk, hands and objects: Vecteezy.com Page 11 People round table: freepik.com