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*The Resource Centre also  
has an information sheet  
about how to write a funding  
application.*



**Brighton & Hove**  
City Council supported

Published August 2012

# Reporting to a funder

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## A step-by-step guide to writing an evaluation report for a funder

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When you receive a small grant, the organisation that gives you the grant will usually ask you to send them some information at the end of the project. They will probably want to know:

- H What you spent the grant money on.
- H What you did, e.g. what activities you ran.
- H How many people took part.
- H How the money improved things for the people who took part in your project or benefited from your work.

Some funders provide a form for you to fill in. Others just ask you to write a short report and send it to them. This information sheet is mainly focussed on writing an evaluation report from scratch, but you may also find it useful when thinking about how to fill in an evaluation form.

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## Why write an evaluation?

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### Why does the funder want an evaluation?

When you are writing your evaluation, it is useful to think about why the funder wants an evaluation, and what they will use it for. This is generally because:

- H They need to know that you spent your grant on what you said you would spend it on.
- H They need to show *their* funders that they are using their money wisely. Most grant giving organisations make decisions about who to give grants to, but it's not actually their money. It may come from donations, the government, businesses or other charities.
- H They want good examples of projects that they can use in their publicity, so that they can get more funding to give to more projects in future.
- H You might apply to them again in future. An evaluation shows them whether you are a good organisation to fund.

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## Why is it useful for your group to do an evaluation?

Evaluating your project can be really useful for your group. You need to give the funder the information they want, but the process of preparing an evaluation report can help you think about what went well, what didn't go so well, and what you would do differently next time. Try to involve as many people as possible in doing the evaluation report, as this will help get more ideas about the successes of your project and the problems you have faced. Keep your discussions in mind when you are planning for the future, so that you can build on your successes and use your experience to improve things.

## Before you start

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### Read through your original application

Check what you said you were going to do. Don't panic if what you have actually done is slightly different from your original plans - funders usually understand that plans change a bit as you go along.

### Check what the funder has asked you to do

Check any letters or forms you have received from your funder.

- H Is there a deadline date by which you must send the evaluation to them? Do they ask you to include any specific information in the evaluation?

### Discuss the evaluation report with your group

Your report will contain more useful information if you get ideas from a range of people. Discuss it at a committee meeting. Find out:

- H What do the committee think were particularly successful parts of the project/the work you spent the grant on?
- H What problems were encountered along the way?
- H What did you end up doing to solve problems?
- H Did the funding get spent exactly as you planned? If not, why not?
- H Did you make changes or improvements to your planned project along the way?
- H What were the benefits of the project to the people who were involved?
- H What, if anything, would you do differently in future?

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## Writing your evaluation report

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The next few pages are a step-by-step guide to writing your report. Remember that different funders will want different information, so make sure you include anything your funder has specifically asked for.

In general, it is important to include:

- H A 'thank you' to the funder for making your project possible.
- H A description of what you did.
- H Any changes you made to the original plan that you sent the funder in your funding application.
- H A description of how you collected information about the success of your work.
- H Information about how people benefited from the project.
- H A breakdown of how you spent the grant money.
- H Photos and other evidence.
- H Conclusion.

Below is more information about what to include in each of these sections, with some examples.

### 1. Thanking the funder

If you are writing a letter or a report (as opposed to filling in an evaluation form) it is a good idea to begin by thanking the funder for supporting your project.

### 2. A description of what you did

This should be a short description of the activities you ran, and should include some figures showing how many people took part.

For example:

*"We organised 12 basketball sessions for girls and boys aged 11 to 15 years. A total of 14 children attended these sessions."*

Or

*"We organised a street party for the local community which took place on July 15th 2012. The street was closed to cars for four hours, and we ran street games such as tug of war and an egg and spoon race. We had a bouncy castle for children, and live music performed by pupils from our local school. The party was attended by 49 people in total. 8 volunteers were involved in organising it, 3 of whom had not been involved in organising with our group in the past."*

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If your funding application focussed on running activities for a particular group of people, or increasing involvement of a particular group, you should include information about how many people from that group took part.

For example, if your funding application focussed on increasing women's participation in your group, you need to give information about women's participation.

*"Our women's yoga classes were attended by 17 women in total. 9 of these had not taken part in any of our activities or projects before, so we were very pleased to have increased the number of women getting involved with our group."*

### 3. Any changes to your original plan

It is quite common to make some changes to your project plan as you go along. It's difficult to know in advance exactly how things are going to work out. You might have to change things if you don't get all the funding you apply for. You might also choose to change things if you work out a better way of doing them or in response to requests from people taking part.

Funders are usually understanding about changes of plan, and it is important to be open about these. It shows you are trustworthy, and may also be an opportunity to show how the changes have been positive in some ways, even if things did not quite go to plan.

*"We originally planned to run weekly table tennis and badminton sessions over a six month period. However, after six weeks we had very few people taking part in table tennis, and badminton was oversubscribed. In order to include as many people as possible and respond to the interests of the community, we decided to cancel the table tennis sessions and run two weekly badminton sessions instead."*

Or

*"Unfortunately we did not receive all the funding we had hoped to get, so had to think about how to run the project on a smaller budget. Instead of providing a meal at our monthly social events, the community brought food to share with each other, which everyone really enjoyed. We had planned four trips to London tourist attractions. Instead we ran three trips to more local destinations, two of which were free (Littlehampton beach and Cuckmere Haven), so we only had to pay entry fees for one (Arundel Castle). The community really enjoyed discovering these local Sussex places which many people didn't know about before, and are now planning to visit again with their families."*

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*The Resource Centre has a more detailed information sheet, **Monitoring and Evaluation**, to help you with the gathering information about how successful your work has been. We also have an information sheet about **Designing and Using Questionnaires**.*

## 4. How did you collect information about your success?

In this section you need to briefly describe what you did to collect information about how your work was going. This might include counting the number of people that took part, and asking them how your project benefitted them.

For example:

*“We kept a record of how many boys and girls attended each session. We carried out a survey at the beginning and end of the project. In one section we used exactly the same questions so that we could measure how people felt about their health and fitness before and after they had attended the swimming lessons.”*

## 5. How did people benefit from your work?

In this section you need to look back at your original application to what you said the aims of your project were. State whether you achieved your aims, and give any evidence you have. If the funder has any particular focus of their own, make sure you also explain how your project matched up to these. For example, if the funder only funds health projects, explain what the health benefits of your project were.

Here is an example:

*“In our application we said we had four aims:*

- 1. Reduce isolation by giving people an opportunity to spend time with one another.*
- 2. Increase people’s participation in physical exercise.*
- 3. Improve children’s knowledge of local history.*
- 4. Involve new people in volunteering and help them develop skills which will improve their chances of getting a job.*

*We achieved these in the following ways:*

- 1. We conducted a survey of everyone who took part in our project. 64% of people said they had made friends by coming to our events and that they now saw those friends outside of the group. 96% of people said they looked forward to the group activities as a time when they would get to chat to friendly people. This shows we successfully reduced isolation and provided an opportunity for people to spend time with one another.*
- 2. We asked everyone who took part in our swimming sessions whether they felt they got more physical exercise as a result of the project.*

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*100% people said they did, and 60% said it was their only regular physical exercise. This shows we successfully increased people's participation in physical exercise.*

- 3. We took children from our community on a history tour of Brighton, run by a local history group. Afterwards they made posters showing everything they had learnt. This shows we improved children's knowledge of local history.*
- 4. There were nine volunteers involved in running our project. Four of these had not been involved in previous projects. Six of our volunteers were unemployed before the project began. By taking part they developed many skills, including organising an event, designing publicity and leading a group activity. Three people also gained training in First Aid, and one person in Food Hygiene. These experiences will make people more likely to find employment in future, and one person, who helped run the children's activities, has already gained a job in a playgroup."*

## 6. How you spent the grant

You need to provide a breakdown of how you have spent the grant money. Some funders will want you to provide receipts to back this up. If there is anything significantly different between how you have spent the grant and how you said you would spend it, make sure you have explained this in the "Any changes to the original plan" section.

You could provide information about how you spent your grant as a simple list, For example:

"This is how we spent our grant:

Swimming lessons: £300

Venue hire: £350

Refreshments: £100

Transport: £250

Total: £1000

Another way to lay it out is in a table. This is especially useful if you have a lot of information to include.

## 7. Photos and other evidence

Item	Amount
Swimming lessons	£300
Venue hire	£350
Refreshments	£100
Transport	£250
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1000</b>

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It is great if you can include photos, quotes and other evidence with your report. It brightens it up and shows the funder how much your community really enjoyed the project.

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*The Resource Centre has a sample photo consent form that you can use to get permission from people to use their photos and photos of their children.*

If you use photos make sure this is OK with the people who are in them. It is a good idea to ask people before taking their photo at your events. This means that when it comes to using the pictures you already have permission. If you haven't already got permission, just pick a few and ask the people in them if it's OK for you to use them.

Think about other visual things you could include to brighten up your report. For example, if children have done any artwork as part of the project, you could include an example. If you have created a logo for your group, include that. If your project involved training people, you could include a copy of a certificate.

Quotes are also a great way of showing how much the project meant to people. If you conduct a survey, include a question which asks people to say why the project is important to them, or why they come along to the group activities. You can then use these quotes in your report. If you haven't done a survey, you could ask a few people from the group to tell you what the project meant to them, and write down what they say.

If you can find some quotes which directly relate to the aims and benefits you have described, this is great. If not, just include any quotes which show that the project was important to people.

*"Coming to the weekly coffee mornings has made a really big difference to me. I had recently retired and was feeling quite lonely. It has allowed me to make friends with people who live close by, which makes me feel much more at home in the neighbourhood."*

*"I like football club. I have made new friends. Now I play with my friends everyday in the park. This makes me happy because before I just went home on my own and played on my computer."*

*"The best thing about the event was spending time with people from my country, and giving the children a chance to learn about their cultural heritage."*

## 8. Conclusion

Finish off your report with a short concluding statement, which sums up what you have said and ends on a positive note. You can also

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mention the kinds of things you are thinking of doing in future. This is particularly important if you are hoping to receive further funding from the same organisation.

Here are some examples:

*“As you can see, the funding you have provided has been very important for our group. We have run a successful project and this has really improved things for a lot of people in our community. Please feel free to get in touch if you would like any more information.”*

*“The funding you have provided over the past year has allowed us to build up our organisation and get more people involved. We have developed successful activities which we hope to continue in future. We have also gained valuable experience which will help us run new activities in the coming year. Our plan is to increase the number of sports activities we run, so that we attract a wider range of people, and to focus especially on activities that are accessible for people who use wheelchairs.”*