

Key general principles for evaluators.

- Build evaluation in from the start of projects or programmes, for example by making sure that the necessary data collection arrangements are in place.
- Consider how detailed the evaluation needs to be. Large or innovative projects will justify more extensive evaluation than smaller projects based on tried and tested approaches.
- Ensure there is a way of checking the standard of operation - i.e. that the programme is being run as intended.
- Where the ultimate outcome is long term consider obtaining short or 'intermediate' as well as long term outcome measures. (In the case of offender programmes these might include changes in attitude, substance abuse, qualifications obtained etc, depending what the programme is trying to achieve.) These will give more immediate results and help to illustrate *how* the programme is working.
- Choose outcome measures to suit what the programme is designed to do.
- Make sure that sample sizes are sufficient to produce robust results.
- Aim to have a control or comparison group so robust analysis can be made of the difference made by the programme.
- Make sure selection effects are accounted for. With offender programmes this means looking at the outcomes for those *not* selected for the programme or who drop out as well as those who complete it.
- Make sure that evaluators are not involved in running or evaluating the programme being evaluated.

Based on a Home Office Guidance Note, *Programmes for offenders: guidance for evaluators*, 1999 *LINKCRP College, Collier and Brand*