### Worksheet 7: Writing a brief for an external evaluation

| **Evaluation brief structure** | **Your information** |
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| **Set the scene**  Provide some brief information about your service. | Click here to enter text. |
| **Purpose of the evaluation**  What do you hope to achieve as a result of the evaluation? Why is an external evaluation necessary to achieve this? | Click here to enter text. |
| **Audience**  Outline who the evaluation is for, as it is important that the evaluators tailor the evaluation for its specific purpose. Who is your key target audience, and what evidence do they need you to provide? | For example, is the purpose to answer to commissioners, or to influence policy? |
| **Focus and research questions**  Clarify the evaluation’s specific focus and questions. What exactly do you want to find out? (Do not expect your evaluation to answer too many questions – ensure the scope you set for it is achievable within the resources you have.)  Evaluations usually focus on the service’s existing objectives and intended outcomes, and the extent to which these have been achieved. If this is the focus, it is important to state the objectives of your service in concrete ways that can be assessed, so that you are able to see to what extent they have been achieved by the end of the evaluation.  Reviewing existing evidence can be a key first step to deciding the focus of the evaluation. You may also want to work with a group of colleagues, stakeholders, or experienced evaluators to clarify the focus and questions. | For example, do you want someone to write up a clear account of what your service is providing? Is the focus on outcomes for children/young people, or on the service’s wider impact? |
| **Learning and participation plan**  State whether you aim for the evaluation to help more people in your service to learn evaluation skills. | For example, will a member of staff shadow the evaluator? Is there potential for children and young people to take part in the design or implementation of the evaluation? Should staff be able to continue to use the tools to measure outcomes in the future? |
| **Methods, sampling, analysis**  Outline the kind of data that you want the researcher to collect. Do you have an existing monitoring system to be used? You can request that particular methods, sampling or analysis should be used, if you have preferences, but do not feel you have to specify every detail, as evaluators applying will provide what they see as the best methodology to use. | Click here to enter text. |
| **Outputs: reports, presentations, interim reports, training sessions etc**  Be very specific about the outputs you need. What kind of final report do you want?  It is a good idea to ask for early findings or interim reports. This will give you an idea of the progress of the findings and will help you to make sure you get what you need at the right time. Also, findings from interim reports can help to inform the service you deliver. | As well as a complete final report, specify whether you also want a shorter, less technical summary report or a presentation for a particular audience. |
| **Plan for dissemination of findings/influence/implementation**  It may be that your evaluation is intended as an internal piece of work to be read by a small group of colleagues, commissioners or partners. But if it is intended to influence policymakers or win support, you should outline your communication strategy for the findings. | For example, do you want the evaluator to write articles or present the findings at seminars? |
| **Management of the evaluator**  State who the evaluator will be accountable to, and where they will get their support from. It is best to have a clear line of accountability through an individual who is responsible for overseeing the evaluation as a whole. Line managers should be updated regularly to make sure the evaluator is meeting their aims and objectives (for example, through catch-up meetings or progress reports). |  |
| **Advisory group**  State whether there will be an advisory group, and who it will include. The evaluator’s line manager should be a member (or perhaps chair) of the advisory group. Besides offering support for the evaluator, an advisory group can ensure that partner agencies or funders that may be affected by the evaluation process or findings have an opportunity to be represented.  The evaluation should be accountable to those whose lives it concerns. | Advisory group members might include:   * representatives of funding organisations * evaluators/policy experts in the field of study * representatives of partner agencies * senior management * people who are, or are similar to, the people you hope to influence * representatives of service users/those being studied. |
| **Timescale**  Be very specific about your deadlines, and the dates you require deliverables. Ask the applicants to submit a timetable which allows realistic resources for each of the tasks they will carry out.  It is usually best to ensure that evaluation reports emerge before decisions about the service are made, so it is best to avoid asking for a report to appear the day your project finishes. | Click here to enter text. |
| **Budget**  Give an estimate of how much you will pay for the evaluation, and the applicant will provide a breakdown of how they will carry out the work within the proposed budget. | Click here to enter text. |
| **Right to publish: Intellectual property**  Outline who can publish what, and with whose agreement. You may want to specify whether the intellectual property lies with your service or with the evaluator (or is shared). You may also want to specify that evaluators can publish material only with your specific agreement and after you have had the opportunity to check the report prior to publication. | Click here to enter text. |