

Impact evaluation of CPD



Continuing
professional
development

Impact evaluation

To evaluate the impact of professional development it is crucial to consider what was intended to be achieved, and what impact could reasonably be expected, in any given time frame.

The principles set out below recognise that impact should be considered in its widest sense – in terms of the needs of the school, the children and young people, and the individual's professional development. And accepting that the weightings given to these different needs will not necessarily be consistent across all professional development activities.

The evidence base for impact evaluation needs to be broad – for instance, it could include enjoyment of learning or improvements in children and young people's attitudes to school work. The evaluation of impact is not the end of the process but a crucial link between the development activities completed, and what may follow as part of the long-term planning for CPD.

Linked to the principles for effective evaluation of impact there are suggestions for questions to consider and discuss before the development activities are agreed, and after they have been completed. The questions assume that individuals will be able to engage in professional dialogue with key school personnel as an element of their performance management. The accompanying tools provide prompts and formats for recording the questions and answers.

Principles underlying effective evaluation of the impact of CPD

- 1 Planning for CPD and the evaluation of its impact should be integral to performance management.
- 2 Impact evaluation should focus on what participants learn, how they use what they have learned, and the effect on the learning of children and young people.
- 3 There should be an agreed timeline for evaluating outcomes, accepting that some outcomes, such as children and young people's improved performance, may take longer to become evident than others. Unanticipated outcomes will also be considered by the review.
- 4 Planning and implementation of the impact evaluation should be a collaborative process between the individual and key staff involved in performance management and/or coaching and mentoring.
- 5 The evidence base and the success criteria for the evaluation of impact should be agreed.
- 6 Impact evaluation should be considered in the short, medium and long term. Longer-term professional development activities should involve formative reviews of impact at agreed stages.
- 7 The evaluation of impact should include a cost-benefit analysis of the professional development.
- 8 The processes for evaluating the impact of CPD activities need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are effective and proportionate.

Questions to guide consideration of impact evaluation

This section contains questions for the individual undertaking CPD, their line manager, and the person responsible for leading CPD within the school. The questions are based on the underlying principles. They are designed specifically for evaluating impact on the assumption that the preliminary needs identification and planning have already been carried out. If these questions are used in the context of performance management it is important to stress the supportive and developmental nature of the process.

Prior questions

These are questions to be considered before the professional development is undertaken.

Prior questions for the participant

Participants should consider these questions with their line manager, or another identified person such as a mentor or coach.

- 1 Who have you discussed the potential impact of your intended learning outcomes with?
- 2 What specific outcomes will result from this professional development activity?
 - How will your practice be changed?
 - How will the professional development benefit you?
- 3 How will the professional development benefit the wider school, your colleagues, and children and young people?

- 4 When would it be appropriate to evaluate the evidence of outcomes? (There may be a need for staged reviews – short, medium, long term.)
- 5
 - How will the evidence base for evaluating the impact of the professional development be collected?
 - How will children and young people contribute to this?
 - What will be the form of the evidence?
- 6 What would be appropriate criteria to judge the intended impact?

Prior questions for the CPD leader

- 1 Is the strategy and timescale for evaluating impact appropriate?
- 2 Has the activity been costed, and does the expected impact suggest that the professional development is cost-effective?
- 3 How will the impact evaluation feed into performance management procedures?
- 4 Is there more the school could do to maximise the impact?

Review questions

These are questions to be considered at an agreed stage (or stages) after the professional development has been completed.

Review questions for the participant

Participants should consider these questions with their line manager, or another identified person such as a mentor or coach.

- 1 • What is your evidence of impact?
 - Is there more evidence to be reviewed? If so, when will it be available for review?
- 2 • Does the evidence suggest that the professional development had the intended impact on you, your colleagues, your school and your students, when judged against the agreed criteria?
 - If not, why might this be the case?
- 3 Were there any unexpected outcomes for you, for your colleagues, your school, or your students?

Review questions for the line manager, or another identified person such as a mentor or coach

- 1 • Do you agree that the identified outcomes suggest that the intended impact has been achieved?
 - Would you like to see further evidence? If so, what should this be?
- 2 By considering the impact of the professional development and its cost, do you think that this activity has been cost-effective?
- 3 How should the participant follow up this particular professional development to maintain or increase the impact?
- 4 What should you or other key staff do to maximise the impact of this professional development on the participant, colleagues, the school and the students?

Review questions for the CPD leader

In addition to the following questions, the CPD leader should also consider the responses to the review questions for the participant and the line manager.

- 1 What will the school do to follow up the professional development and maximise the impact?
- 2 How does the evaluation of impact lead to a greater understanding of what CPD is achieving for the school, the participants, and the children and young people?
- 3 Are the impact evaluations manageable and proportionate to the activities being undertaken?

This tool is presented as a series of prompts for a professional dialogue between:

- the individual teacher planning to undertake the CPD
- the line manager (or coach/mentor) of the individual teacher.

The scenario assumes the preliminary CPD needs-identification and planning have already been carried out. The dialogue which reviews the impact of CPD may take place more than once (ie. at agreed stages following completion of the CPD activity). Prompts for consideration by the school's CPD leader are contained at the end of the tool.

The dialogue should take place within the context of revised performance management arrangements.

A tool to guide impact evaluation of teachers' CPD in schools

Teacher's dialogue prompts

Before the professional development has been carried out:

Topic: Expected outcomes established

'The expected impact of my CPD will be ...

- a) on children and young people
- b) on colleagues
- c) on me
- d) on the school as a whole

Topic: Establishing ways to recognise and evidence outcomes of the CPD

'I believe the best way of recognising outcomes from the CPD will be by ...

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

'The specific evidence of outcomes I will look for will be ...

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

Topic: Timescale for discussing and evaluating outcomes

'The time(s) when I will look to evaluate outcomes will be ...

- a) short term ...
- b) medium term ...
- c) long term ...

After the professional development has been carried out:

Topic: Expected impact of the CPD

'The impact is/is not what I expected it to be. It is ... (If it is not what is expected, why might this be?)

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

'I am/am not aware of there being any unexpected outcomes ...

- a) for my students
- b) for my colleagues
- c) for my school
- d) for me

Topic: Progress made towards the intended outcomes

'The progress I have made towards the intended outcomes is ...

- a) none
- b) some
- c) achieved

Topic: Cost-effectiveness of the CPD

'Have the expected outcomes been fully met and the impact evaluated?

- a) If yes, conclude the dialogue with ... 'Has the CPD been cost-effective with regard to time and finance?'
- b) If no, review what has been achieved and the next steps.

Line manager's dialogue prompts

Before the professional development has been carried out:

Topic: Expected outcomes established

'What are the expected outcomes of your CPD on ...?'

- a) children and young people
- b) colleagues
- c) you

The line manager or coach needs to be able to relate these directly to the role of the individual and the needs of the school, linking with the school CPD plan.

Topic: Establishing ways to recognise and evidence outcomes of the CPD

'What do you believe is the best way of recognising outcomes of CPD ...?'

- a)
- b)
- c)

The line manager or coach should be able to suggest a variety of approaches to recognising outcomes, eg. feedback from children and young people.

Topic: Timescale for discussing and evaluating outcomes

'At what times will the outcomes be discussed and evaluated?

- a) short term
- b) medium term
- c) long term

Agreed times for the discussion and evaluation of outcomes will need to be determined.

After the professional development has been carried out:

Topic: Expected impact of the CPD

'Was the impact what you expected?

- a)
- b)

'Have there been any unexpected outcomes?

- a)
- b)

Topic: Progress made towards the intended outcomes

'What progress have you made towards the intended outcomes?'

- a) none
- b) some
- c) achieved

Topic: Cost-effectiveness of the CPD

'Have the expected outcomes been fully met and the impact evaluated?'

- a) If yes, conclude the dialogue with ... 'Has the CPD been cost-effective with regard to time and finance?'
- b) If no, review what has been achieved and the next steps.

CPD leader prompts from the school perspective

- 'Have I considered what the school could do to follow up this professional development to maximise its impact?'
- 'How has the evaluation of impact led to a greater understanding of what CPD is achieving for the school, the individuals involved, and the children and young people?'
- 'Has the impact evaluation been manageable and proportionate to the activities undertaken?'

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