IMPACT Centre Evaluation – FAQs

Q: The ITT indicates that the evaluation will involve mixed-methods (quant and qual) work - can you provide more information on your expectations for the main stage evaluation and what data might be made available to the evaluator?

A: The centre director and leadership team are aware of the Funders' independent impact evaluation and have agreed to work with and support all reasonable requirements of any independent evaluator. However, there will be some key organisations and key stakeholders working with the Centre who may not yet be aware of this independent evaluation.

We anticipate that the development and co-production of the concordat agreement in the design and scoping phase will be instrumental in agreeing to share data as appropriate with the Centre, funders, and possibly other key stakeholders.

Data will be made available to the evaluator through the IMPACT award monitoring and reporting and through the Centre-led evaluation. However, we anticipate the independent evaluators will want to supplement this data and decide themselves what they should collect in order to assess the overall impact of the Centre from the Funders' perspective against the underlying Theory of Change and four primary aims of the Centre.

This will be a key component of the design and scoping phase.

At this stage we are still exploring what data might be available to the evaluator, as the Centre itself has only just completed its co-development phase and is in the process of developing its own operation, delivery, and evaluation frameworks. We anticipate that data will relate to the aims of the Centre and are likely to be a mix of qualitative and quantitative insights – key performance indicators, impact measures, data related to the effectiveness of IMPACT's four main delivery models. It could also include economic data, engagement data and data that the Centre-led evaluation may decide to collect – ideally this data should all relate back to the underlying Theory of Change, the primary aims of the centre, and the evaluation questions.

Q: Do you anticipate the IMPACT-led evaluation and Funders' independent impact evaluation overlapping or duplicating?

A: The IMPACT-led evaluation is primarily formative, providing a feedback loop focusing on IMPACT's own activities in real time, to test its ways of working and allow the team to pivot and adjust in specific areas as necessary.

The Funders' independent impact evaluation, on the other hand, will be from the Funders' perspective, assessing the overall impact of the centre against its four main aims, and incorporating the effectiveness of the centre's formative evaluation feedback model into that.

The focus of the independent evaluation is very much an overview of how the funding has created (or not created) the space for IMPACT's work; how effective the formative evaluation's feedback loop has been for IMPACT's activities and outputs; and understanding what the role and the impact of funding this work has been on the adult social care sector as a whole.

The independent evaluator will need to work closely with both the funders and the IMPACT Centre to reduce the risk of duplication of outputs; any data collected by the centre may be usefully fed into the Funders' independent impact evaluation.

Q: Is there a different audience for the IMPACT-led and the Funders' independent impact evaluation?

A: Yes, the primary audience for the independent evaluation include the funders, the Programme Management Board, Programme Advisory Group, and the Programme Coordination Group.

The primary audience for the Centre-led evaluation will be the IMPACT Centre itself: its leadership team, and its various stakeholders.

There will be some overlap with secondary audiences and with wider stakeholders interested in the two evaluations and their findings.

Q: Will there be an opportunity for asking further questions?

A: We are happy for you submit further questions to Amanda.Watt@health.org. We will update this FAQ document to keep everyone informed of any additional questions that have been asked.

Q: Will any specified contract review meetings be accompanied by budget reviews as the needs of the evaluation emerge over time?

A: THF and ESRC take a partnership approach to this work, and during the inception meeting stage we would agree on the ways in which we will work together. The evaluation lead at THF will be the main point of contact for the evaluation partner and will monitor progress and risks on the contract through regular catch-up calls or e-mails. We would be happy if the independent evaluator wanted to build in specific contract review meetings to discuss progress against the budget, the approach, risks etc. We do expect a progress/contract review meeting for the evaluator to take place towards the end of the establishment phase (i.e. after the designing and scoping phase of the independent evaluation), before the delivery and implementation phase of the evaluation.

Given the longevity of the evaluation, we also anticipate that elements of the proposed approach of the evaluation might have to flex, and we expect that any changes to the approach would be an open discussion between the evaluator and the Funders. This would include discussing any implications on timelines, resources, and costs. However, at this early stage we are looking for potential methodologies and approaches to fit within the overall budget.