

# Evaluating outcomes and impacts

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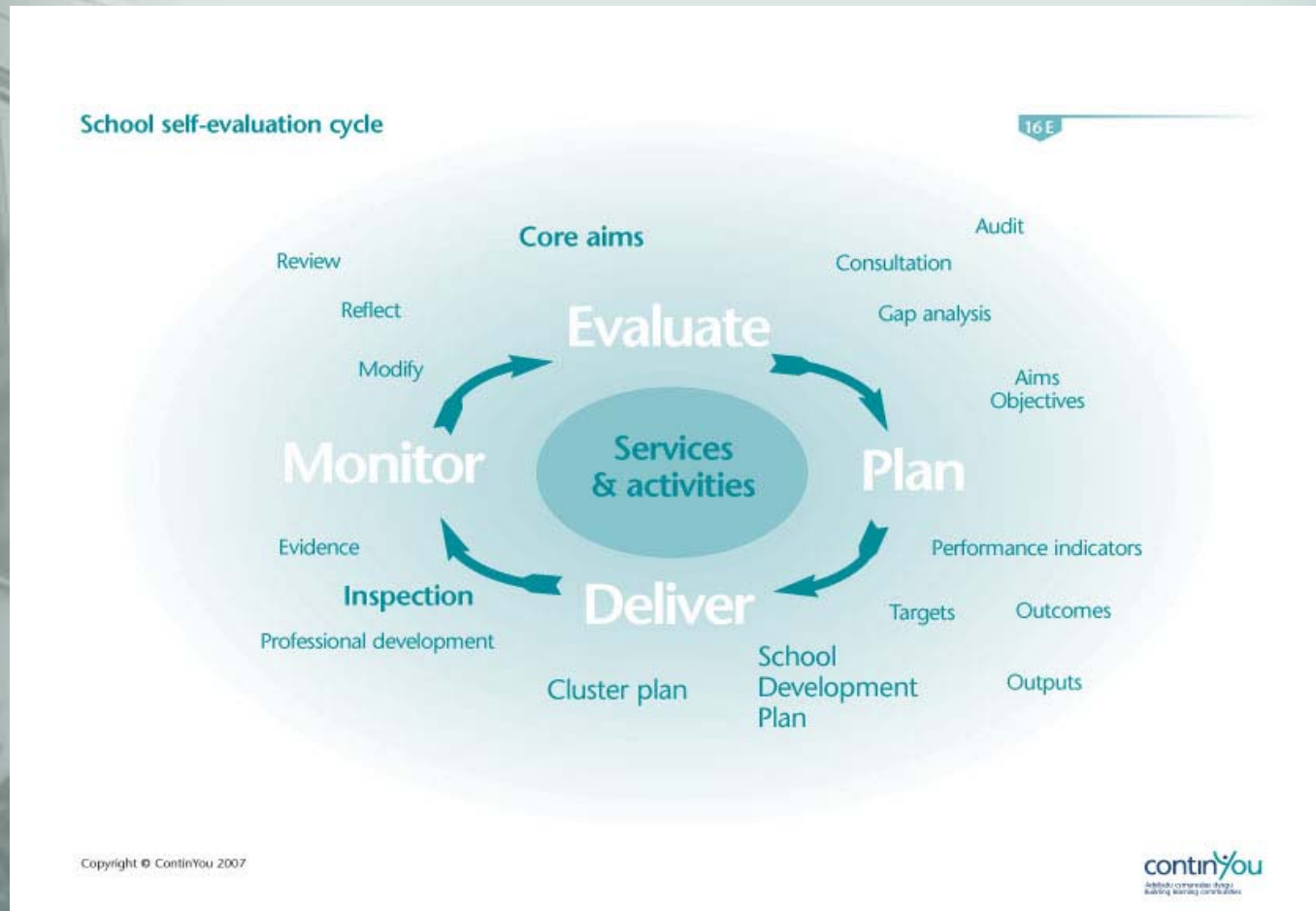
# Aim of Workshop

This workshop will explore the importance of evaluating the outcomes and impact of services and discuss how this might be achieved.

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# Project (service) self evaluation cycle



# Evaluation process

- Planning
- Collecting evidence
- Assembling, analysis and interpreting
- Reporting and sharing
- Reflecting and moving forward

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# Why evaluate?

To ensure that your project/service ...

- is meeting the needs of families/local community
- is reaching all members of the community
- has had an impact on all members of the community
- improves practice both during the initiative and on future occasions.

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# Why Evaluate? (cont.)

- To inform future projects/services, by looking at the progress in relation to the original aims
- To justify the funding allocated to the project/service and to support any future funding allocations
- To ensure that the project/service meets your own and national targets e.g. NSF, ECM

# Evaluating Outcomes and Impacts

Evaluation can be based on these three key principles:

- It involves making judgements, based on evidence, about the value, quality and impact of a project/service.
- It is open and clear and involves all partners, including the people taking part.
- It helps with decision-making during a project and for future projects.

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# Levels of Evaluation

- Participant
- Project (or service)
- Programme



# Terminology

- Baseline = Starting point
- Output = Result directly related to a process e.g. how many people attended
- Outcome = Results in a wider context e.g. parents more able to cope with their children's behaviour
- Impact = Results in a wider context – over a period of time e.g. children able to achieve more at school.

# When to evaluate?

- At the onset of the project/service (baseline)
- During the project/service (review)
- At the completion of the project/service (output/outcome)
- At a later date (impact)

# What to evaluate?

The effect of services in terms of:

- Specific outcomes for participants
- Implications/impacts for different groups, and community overall
- How and why services do/do not achieve objectives

# What to evaluate (cont.)

Implementation processes, structures and outputs to improve services eg:

- What is delivered and how?
- Characteristics of participants? Who is not being reached?
- Barriers and challenges
- Best practice solutions
- Lessons learned

Remember hard and soft outcomes

# Good Practice

- Link activities to consultation/ targets/ strategy
- Ensure aims and objectives are clear and precise
- Collect baseline evidence – and the same evidence later
- Information to be relevant, clear, quick and simple
- Seek views of a range of people
- Get monitoring mechanisms built in, relevant and cover main issues. Regular, but not too often.
- Get procedures, processes and responsibilities built in and clear

## Good Practice (cont.)

- Clear indicators – be SMART
- Be clear about anticipated outcomes, as well as immediate output
- Evidence gathering is meaningful and part of everyday work
- Results are fed back and disseminated wider
- Feedback informs future planning
- Learn from best practice

# Tricky issues

- Measuring right aspects?
- Key areas – or be comprehensive?
- Cause and effect?
- Timescales to demonstrate impact?

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# Evaluation is important because it ...

- Provides accurate baseline and contextual information
- Assesses if project/service has achieved aims and objectives
- Informs ongoing/future decision making
- Improves practice
- Identifies any issues
- Secures support
- Presents evidence on contribution to wider objectives ... & allocation of resources!

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