

EVALUATION OF BRAVE PROJECT – BCSP SYNOPSIS OF KEY FINDINGS

Background

In 2015 BCSP funded an evaluation of the BRAVE project. A full procurement was undertaken and the consultancy Centre for Public Innovation (CPI) appointed.

Findings

The evaluators were very positive about BRAVE as a project. They also made some very salient observations about its management environment. Unfortunately, despite strenuous efforts by all parties, there was insufficient data to provide a meaningful analysis on Social Return on Investment. However, CPI, made a proposal which should rectify this position in the future.

Key Positives

- The service users placed a particularly high value on the emotional support provided by BRAVE. They were also very positive about the help from BRAVE when engaging with agencies regarding their case.
- BRAVE's management of its volunteers was highly commended.
- The project enjoyed the unqualified support of partnership agency staff from the City Council and the police. Some went so far as to rate the service as 'vital'.
- A particularly pertinent finding was that BRAVE support allowed some clients to 'manage' their ASB experience at their current address, reducing the demand on social Housing for moves.

Area of Concern

- BRAVE had a high drop out rate of referrals at first contact. The evaluation drew attention to the lack of understanding as to why this happens. It made a recommendation how to address this problem.

Challenge for Victim Support

- As BRAVE operates under the auspices of Victim Support, it will not work with clients where there is an indication that some level of offending may have occurred. Partner agency staff noted that ASB rarely lends itself to a simplistic perpetrator / victim division. The evaluators identified this as an area to address going forward.

Challenge for BCSP

- The evaluators observed that the BCSP Service Level Agreement placed too much emphasis on process, and on targets that the project had no means of

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controlling (e.g. number of volunteers recruited). They advocated instead more focus on impact, such as the improvement in client wellbeing which BRAVE is well placed to report on.

Social Return On Investment (SROI)

- The final report contained data from reviewing 188 City Council ASB cases and four BRAVE clients. As only one of the City Council cases was also referred to BRAVE, it was found that this field was too limited to draw up a meaningful SROI analysis.
- However the analysis undertaken did identify the likely cost per ASB case for the City Council and police.
- The evaluators have created a spreadsheet which can be locally populated. They offered to re-run the analysis again in six month's time to achieve a valid analysis. Follow up arrangements are presently underway.

Conclusion

The evaluation found that BRAVE was a well run project delivering an important service. It made a clear recommendation that the project continues. The evaluation also provided valuable recommendations to make changes.

The reason why BCSP agreed to fund this evaluation was to develop insight into SROI, and advise the future performance management of interventions of this nature. Due to the difficulties experienced with the data, a full SROI analysis could not be achieved at first try, though arrangements are in place to complete this task. Nonetheless some of the observations made within the wider evaluation will assist BCSP's approach to managing such interventions in future.

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