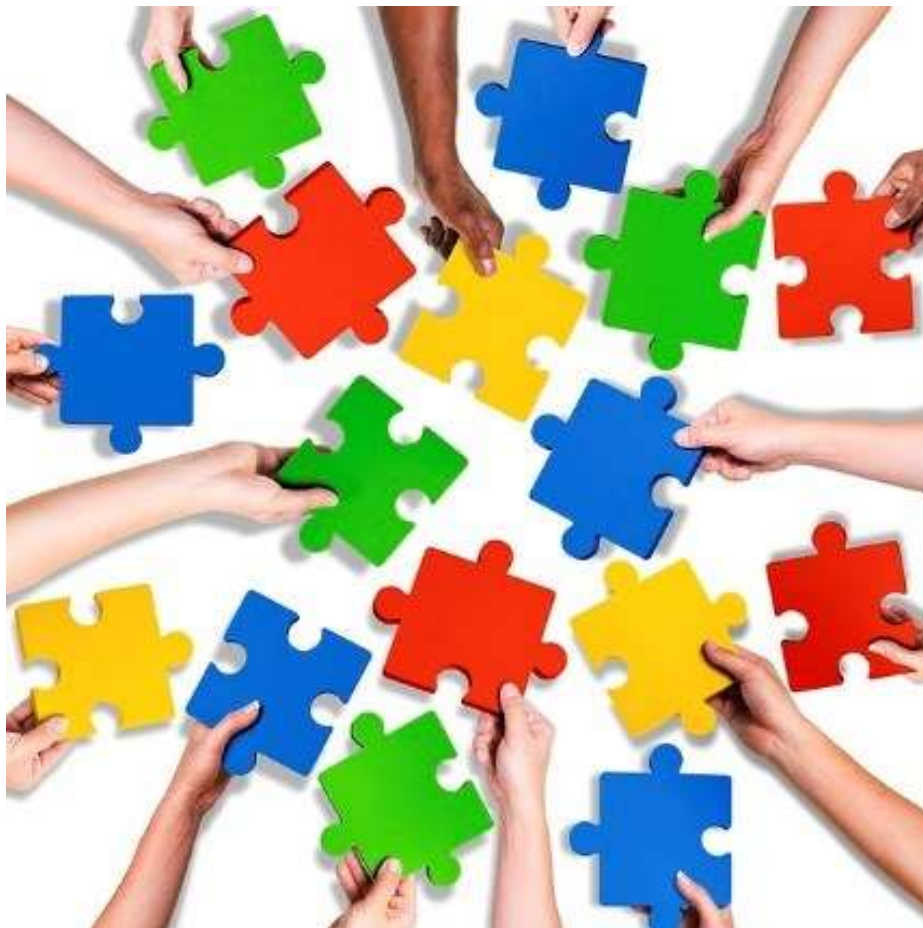


Reimagining Third Sector Commissioning

Post Mapping Meeting Survey Analysis

Providing a baseline of provider views on Monitoring and Evaluation.



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Date	04 th April 2022

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Introduction and purpose

The post mapping questionnaire was designed to collate feedback from providers about their experience of the mapping meeting, and their views on the content and value of their current Service Level agreement, current approach to Monitoring and Evaluation, and role of their link officer.

The Transforming Commissioning Working Group will use the feedback from the questionnaire to inform changes to the Service Level Agreement template and to set clear objectives for stakeholder engagement activities based around strengthening the approach to monitoring and evaluation. The data provides a baseline which can be measured again on conclusion of the project to monitor if the changes made had the desired effect.

Methodology

Between December 2021 and March 2022, a Mapping meeting took place between the planning coordinator and individual grant funded providers. In total 64 meetings took place. A vast amount of qualitative data on aspirations for the reimagining project was gathered through this exercise and will feed into the development of Stakeholder Engagement Plans.

Following the meeting an email was sent (Appendix 1) containing a link to the electronic questionnaire (Appendix 2). To encourage responses the questionnaire was kept short and contained a mix of open and closed questions.

A friendly reminder email was sent to each provider two weeks prior to the questionnaire end date. The consultation closed at midnight on Monday 21 March 2022.

Response

The survey was sent to 64 organisations, in total **51** responses were received representing a response rate of **80%**.

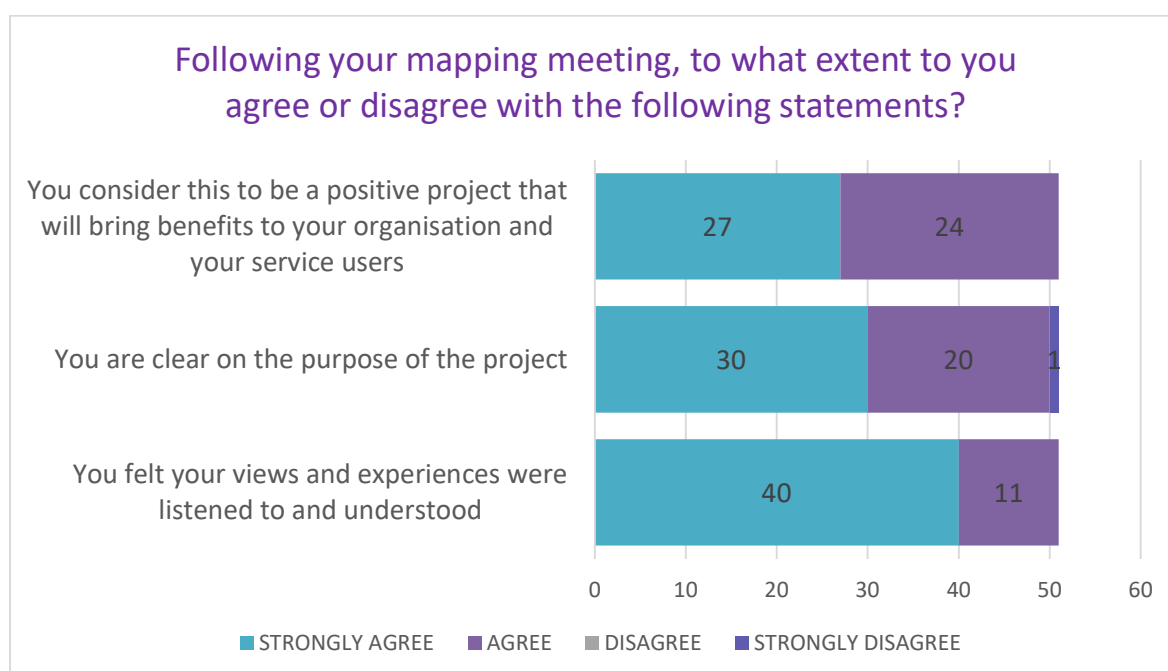
Analysis

Mapping Meeting

The mapping meetings provided an opportunity for currently grant funded organisations to discuss the reimagining project with the planning coordinator. A semi structured interview tool was used to collate data on the service provided, and guide discussion on how the service operated during the COVID-19 pandemic, how this has changed the service moving forward, and talk about concerns and aspirations for the transformation project.

In addition to collating the data for the mapping exercise, the meetings aimed to clarify the purpose of the reimagining exercise, reduce any anxieties, and explain the drivers and potential benefits of the project. It was also an opportunity to talk about aspirations for the reimagining work and this feedback will be used to influence the content of upcoming engagement workshops and collaborative working events.

As part of the post mapping questionnaire, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements about the mapping meeting to evaluate the extent to which the objectives were met. Responses are shown below:



All respondents agreed that their views were **listened to and understood** at the meeting, with over three quarters of respondents stating, 'strongly agree'. Further comments about the meeting support this, full comments are shown in the Appendix, a selection are below

"Ample time was given to consider responses to the stock questions. I felt there was a genuine interest in the service we provide and the challenges we face doing so"

"It was clearly explained the purpose of the meeting and overall aim of the project felt confident that it will benefit services and people who access those services. I felt listened to"

"The mapping meeting was really helpful in understanding the objectives of the project but also as an opportunity to provide an update on the work that our service has done in direct response to Covid and the challenges encountered therein. "

"Mapping is a challenging thing to do, especially when services are changing and responding to things like Covid, hybrid-working and so on. It would be great if this exercise could be regarded not as a one-off, but as the start of a useful resource that can be maintained, updated, and made available in different ways for different stakeholders. ...

All but one respondent indicated that they were **clear on the purpose of the project** and all respondents considered this to be a **positive project** that will bring benefits to their organisation and service users, further comments may indicate that although there is enthusiasm for the project, the potential benefits have yet to be realised.

"I hope and believe this to be a positive project that will bring benefits to your organisation and your service users' as above but will not know for sure until the project is completed "

"Really impressed with the communication that preceded the mapping meeting.... I felt that the planning coordinator was very open and transparent as to the purpose of the project and the likely impact that it would have on our organisation. As much has yet to be established in relation to how commissioning will actually take place, we are naturally still a bit unclear as to the benefits that the new approaches will ultimately deliver. The potential for benefit is nonetheless acknowledged."

Overall, comments were extremely positive, showing support for the project and recognising the meeting as a valuable exercise. Comments are shown in full in the Appendix.

Recommendation:

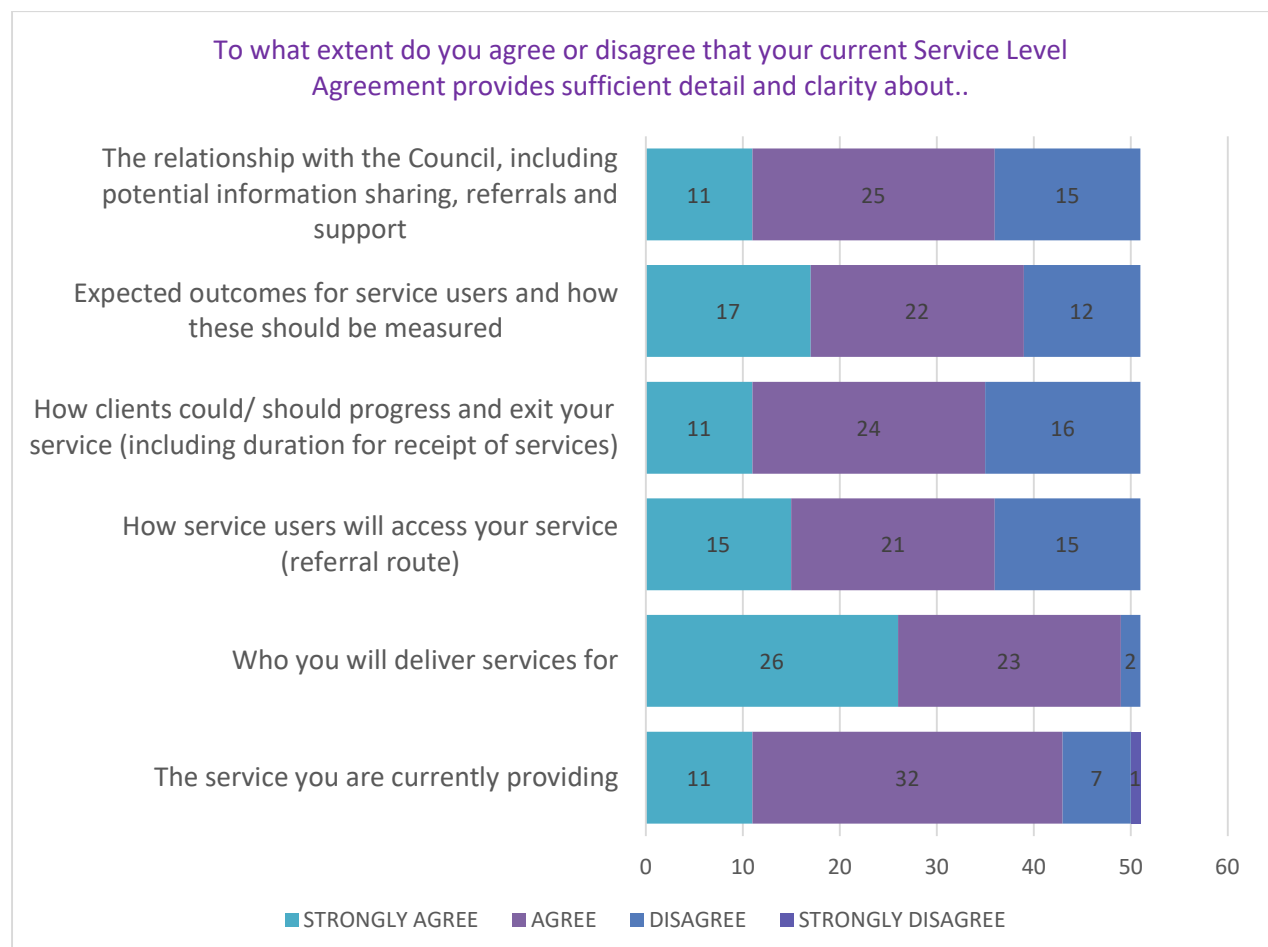
- Explore how the mapping tool could be reviewed and embedded into annual Monitoring and Evaluation processes to ensure that services are systematically mapped and aligned to strategic priorities. Ensure that the tool is viewed as an opportunity for open discussion around building capacity and provides quality information to inform strategic planning.*

Service Level Agreements

The Transforming Commissioning WG has set out a task to review Service Level Agreement templates and the process for updating them to ensure that they can be clear and meaningful (working with the Voluntary Sector Task Group).

To evaluate the quality of existing Service Level Agreements (SLAs), respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed that there was sufficient clarity and detail with respect to six key elements which should form part of their existing agreement.

Following a review of the template and process for updating SLAs these questions will be asked again to ascertain if changes have had the desired impact. Responses to these statements are shown below and provide a baseline from which to measure against.

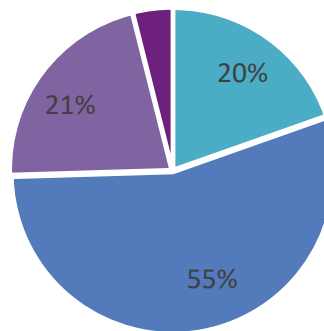


The variation in responses to the question could potentially point towards the varying quality in which the SLAs have been written and highlight that further guidance on how to update SLAs to ensure a clear, accurate summary of expectations, outputs, and outcomes, would be beneficial to accompany some key changes to the template itself.

Respondents were asked if they felt that the SLA serves as a helpful document for considering strategic planning or other key decisions. Whilst the majority agreed this was the case (74.5%), one in four organisations responding (25.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that this was the case.

The SLA is helpful when considering strategic planning and key decision making

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



Base:51

Respondents were given the opportunity to add any further comment that they may have on Service Level Agreements and how they could be improved. Comments are shown in full in the Appendix. Several comments relate to the layout of the SLA documents itself, for example

The current agreements require a full overhaul, there is far too much emphasis on number and not nearly enough detail on what each service does and what benefits this has to the individual and the carer involved.

"I think going forward there is an opportunity to review SLA,s into a more two way contract with better detailed obligations, in particular for funding resources and salary reviews. A more meaningful modern approach, that allows for two way dialogue between funders and organisations."

"The SLA is very repetitive and could be better laid out so that there is more room for descriptors. ...

"Our SLA has too many sections and does not allow for documenting how different parts of the service are being provided to the same person. It is very number orientated and does not reflect the quality or variety of work done. The SLA needs to be simplified and the outcomes looked at afresh taking into account what we do now as a service compared to what was provided when the first SLA was drawn up".

Any new SLA should include how service users should exit or be discharged/move on from our service, it is not clear in the present document.

Consolidation of some of our funding streams may make it more easily managed and as goals are identical on several streams.

Other comments relate to shifting the focus away from just outputs and having a more personal outcomes focus, thus allowing for more flexibility in the way that services are delivered to meet needs.

"The focus needs to shift from number of outputs and service users to the impact and benefit of the service on lives."

"Whilst current SLA is clear on the outcomes to be achieved and the measures associated with these it is apparent that these are very high level and maybe don't best reflect the outcomes that users of the services themselves would wish to achieve. In looking towards future revision/development of SLA's it would be good to use this opportunity to have greater user involvement/coproduction".

"Our SLA needs to reflect the service we are currently delivering post-covid. We engaged with all our clients and this is what people want/need. SLA's need to be more person-centred (like befriending) and reflect client's outcomes more. There also needs to be more flexibility within in the SLA to alter service delivery to meet client's current needs".

Outputs and Outcomes should be more service user focused and flexibility is required to capture the individual benefits and stories of people whose lives have improved as a result of the service. It is difficult to define some of the outcomes that happen in our organisations.

There is definite scope for the format and content of the SLA to be improved. By and large it has remained the same over a number of years and there is very little by way of meaningful outcomes linked to the service that we provide. We are particularly keen on working with the Council to develop a means of monitoring and evaluating progress of our clients against meaningful outcomes.

It is recommended that link officers and interested providers are involved in the process of reviewing the template, supporting guidance notes, and process for writing, updating, and monitoring service level agreements.

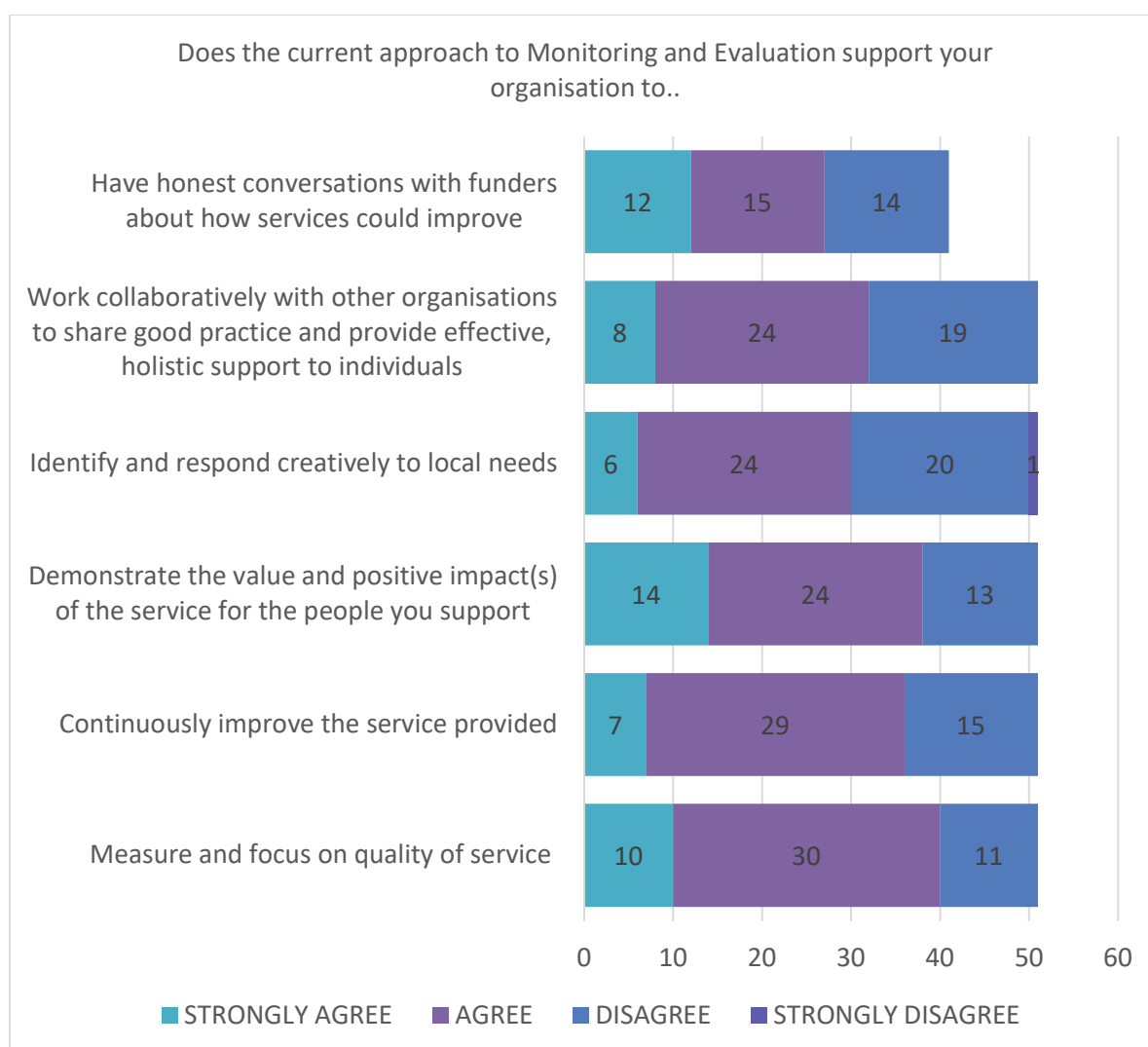
Recommendations:

- *Use feedback to draft new SLA template, outlining rationale for changes and develop guidance notes to clarify expectations in terms of level of detail and content required within each section of the proposed form. Develop approach to setting out meaningful outcomes.*
- *Facilitate workshops to look at draft SLA template, guidance and process with link officers and interested providers, link to FVA to ensure that concerns from across the sector are heard*

Monitoring and evaluation

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation framework is to provide help and support to funded organisations to ensure that agreed objectives as set out in the SLAs are being met. In turn, this ensures that public money is being spent effectively.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with six statements about the current approach to Monitoring and Evaluation, statements are linked to the objectives as set out in the current framework and provide a baseline from which we can measure any changes. Responses are shown below and indicate a mixed experience with respect to the current approach and highlighting several areas for potential improvement.



Respondents were asked to add any further comment that they may have on the monitoring and evaluation process or how it could be improved. Several comments related to the feeling that the arrangements felt like a 'tick box' exercise, and highlighted that lack of feedback can be an issue

Monitoring and evaluation can seem like a "tick box" exercise. Comments / feedback given in the past have never been formally addressed (or so it seems). There needs to be balance between funder's outcomes and client outcomes.

The process feels as if it is merely a tick-box exercise, rather than an evaluation process.

Currently we have little feedback from the 6 monthly reports that we give to the council so we have no way of really knowing whether we are doing what we should be doing or not. As a result the answers to most of the questions are negative. I appreciate that what is set out above is what a monitoring framework should be doing but seeing as we don't get feedback on the reports it is difficult to be positive

In our experience, the annual monitoring and evaluation has involved us completing an update within the SLA document, with no feedback provided other than funding for the following year confirmed. Whilst we are obviously happy with the continuation funding being confirmed, it would be nice to feel our, and our service users, comments have been listened to and any ideas for service development taken on board. A reporting template designed for the provider, rather than designed for the Contracts Officer, would be much more useful.

Other comments relate to timing

We are funded April - March but have to write and submit our evaluation and monitoring forms in Jan/Feb including info for up to the Dec. This is 9 months of the actual year funded. It is unclear when we have to hand in our reports as we are asked for them at different dates each year I believe that rolling reports submitted quarterly or every 6-months would enable H&SCP + ECS to monitor and support/rectify any issues more swiftly and would mean that a whole financial years submission could be made as the 9 month submission would still exist. This method would also support organisations to fully monitor their agreements

Monitoring & Evaluation might be less onerous on all parties if quarterly reports/updates could be submitted showing work done, any gaps identified and identifying challenges or difficulties as they arise rather than 3, 6 or 12 months later.

Several comments relate to the need to develop a framework with a greater focus on outcomes:

Obviously COVID has impacted greatly on how current services are being monitored, however setting this aside there is a need for an increased focus on the achievement of meaningful outcomes and the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework that more closely reflects progress against these. I believe that there is scope for a collaborative approach to be taken towards the development of such a framework that would more accurately represent the achievements that are being made. In our view the relationship between the funder and supplier needs to be stronger with more regular contact being maintained to reflect on progress that is being achieved. Moreover at present, as a supplier you cannot help but feel that you are ignored to an extent and not treated as a full partner. That said the levels of communication taking place with partners at an operational level are meaningful and productive and are focussed on achievement of best outcomes for clients.

There needs to be space for creative flexible approaches to working and to monitoring,. Case studies and personal lived experience best demonstrates the impact of services. The good relationship we have had with our Contracts officer have meant many of these things have been positive and we could have open, good conversations.

Overall, respondents have indicated that a review of the approach to Monitoring and Evaluation would be welcomed, specifically to make the process more meaningful and focussed on improvement (and outcomes). There appears to be an appetite for increased involvement in working collaboratively to identify and meet local needs and challenges with almost half of respondents indicating that the process does not currently support creativity in meeting local needs or working with others to share good practice. There were suggestions about the frequency of reports and the format of the annual monitoring form itself.

It is recommended that the Transforming Commissioning Working Group (together with the Voluntary Sector Task Group), and Stakeholder Engagement Group, looks at the qualitative feedback from the mapping exercise, together with the comments from the questionnaire to develop workshops to look at strengthening the M&E process.

Recommendation:

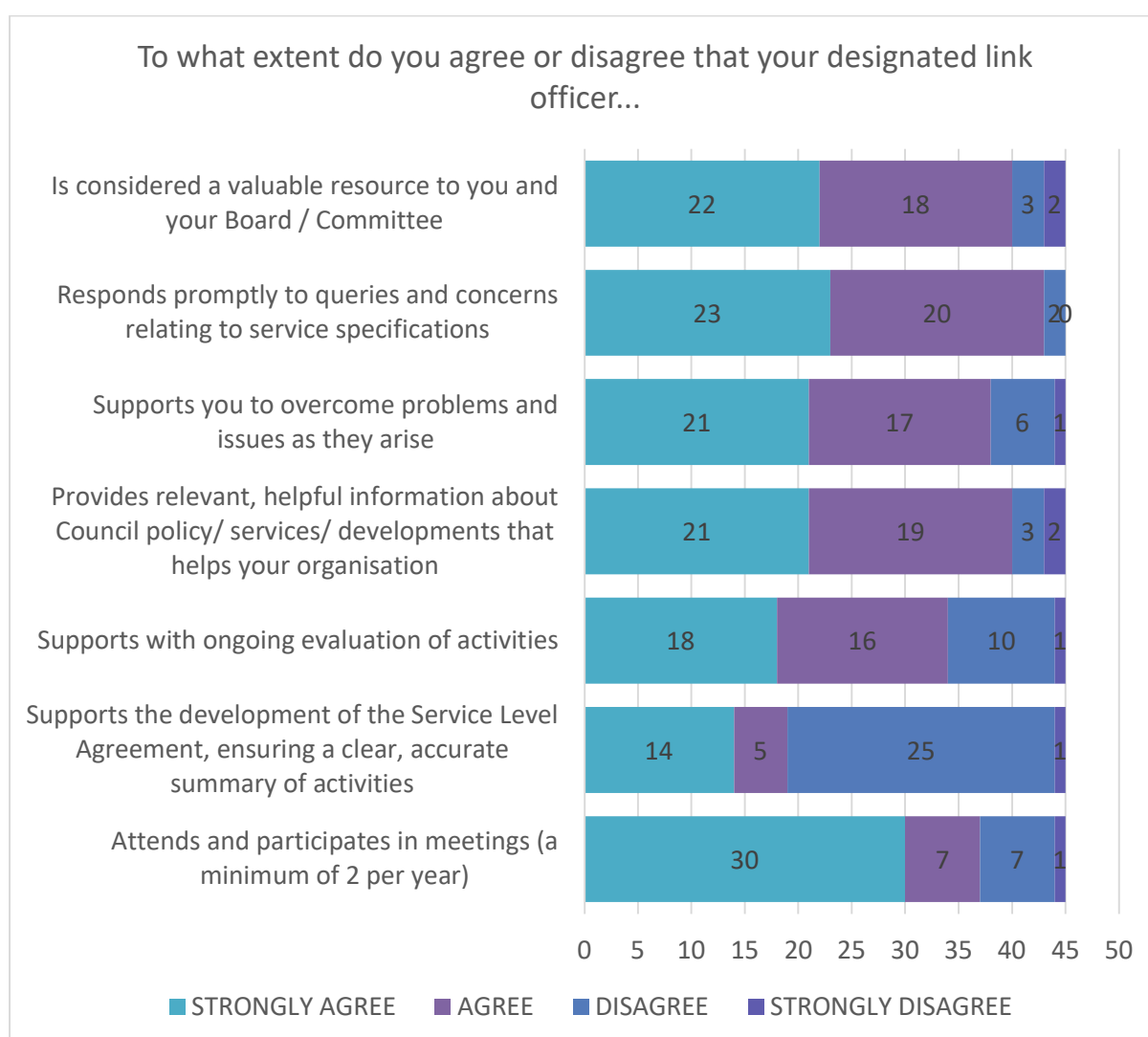
- *Facilitate workshops with link officers and interested providers to look at strengthening approach to monitoring and evaluation. Specifically to explore*
 - a. *Frequency (and timing) of reports*
 - b. *Level and type of data required from each service type to measure outputs and outcomes more consistently (and enable capacity and quality to be measured systematically).*
 - c. *Measuring meaningful outcomes*
 - d. *Annual Monitoring Form/ reporting template (layout)*
 - e. *Linking M&E to SLA / service design briefs/ strategic planning*

Role of the link officer

Organisations who receive grant funding of over £10,000 are allocated a link officer. The key function of a link officer is that of offering advice, guidance, and support to their designated organisations.

The monitoring and Evaluation Framework sets out a number of expectations in relation to their role and largely, respondents agreed these are being met. Notably, over half of respondents disagree that the link officer supports the development of the SLA, ensuring a clear, accurate summary of activities. This will be addressed as part of the review of the SLA process as detailed previously.

Results to the statements are shown below...



Base:45

This question was only asked of organisations who stated that they received grant funding over £10,000 to which 45 organisations responded.

Respondents were asked to comment on the role of the link officer. Many comments relate to the positive relationship that they have with their individual link officer, for example

- *Our Link Officer is always available, is approachable, helpful, flexible and easy to talk to. I am confident in her abilities and if she has been unsure or unable to answer any of my past queries, she will always talk to others who can answer certain query or help"*

However, some comments have pointed to the difficulties that link officers face in achieving the expectations set out within the parameters of their job role, and the factors (such as time) that can inhibit officers from working more effectively with providers to support with meaningful evaluation of services

"Our Link Officer will answer queries promptly and will send info to us that they are asked to send, they are very approachable and have made suggestions during reporting times. However, they have not attended a Board meeting since before June 2020 and I believe before that the attendance was as little as twice since early 2019, this is excused as our having meetings not on a normal working day (although no-one has suggested changing these or changing officers). I wonder whether workload may be an issue. Potentially clearly defining this role to both the officer and the organisations may help."

"Our link officer does not work on the day our board meetings are held."

.... "whilst we very much value their assistance it is apparent that they are somewhat limited in the time that they can spend with with the likes of ourselves and other services operating within the sector as a result of various competing demands on their time. Beyond this, the lack of definition within current SLA's make it difficult for them to undertake any meaningful evaluation of the effectiveness of the supplier and what they have achieved. The hope is that this will be addressed through the reimagination process...."

"...the role of the link officer could benefit from their having the opportunity to dedicate more time with organisations that they are responsible for. This in turn would allow for a greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and ensuring that tangible progress is made towards the achievement of outcomes for clients.... at times they are unable to overcome barriers to progress that exist elsewhere within the authority that inhibit progress. At times also some issues of importance appear to get lost at higher levels within the authority, again inhibiting progress, despite an undoubted willingness on the part of the link officer to progress on our behalf. Notwithstanding the above we very much value the function that is undertaken by the link officer."

Recommendation:

1. Consider the role of 'development officer' and support available to organisations who do not have a designated link officer.
2. Workshop with Link Officers to provide opportunity to discuss the challenges associated with the role and potential support or changes required to enable expectations to be met.

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to add any further comment that they may have on the Health & Social Care Partnership approach to planning, monitoring and developing services and how this could be strengthened. Some comments for consideration include;

- *I feel the whole process needs to be looked at to find a meaningful way to ensure the SLA is clear, easier to monitor and hopefully enables us to have better links with our funders, giving us a clearer way to identify how best we can develop our services.*
- *I would suggest that once a 6 monthly report is submitted then at the very least an acknowledgment is received. A meeting to discuss the report would be helpful where there is an opportunity to discuss the content and any issues that come from it, the past six months, the upcoming 6 months etc This hasn't happened for a number of years and does leave you with the feeling of "What's the point". Having said all that the pandemic has not helped, although in reality it was pretty similar prior to it happening. We would welcome the opportunity for regular 6 monthly meetings with the contracts officer, link person for services to discuss the reports and answer any questions, discuss any issues and move forward together.*
- *I think the key to planning, monitoring and developing services is to understand the services being provided. What impact does it have on the lives of those living in Fife. Meet with the organisation in person or contact via a teams call for that personal interaction. Gather feedback from the service user and the impact the service is having on their lives and what would help further. Work with the outcomes of the mapping exercise to improve and streamline services to ensure they are accessible to all.*
- *For a while the rhetoric has been about partnership working and a focus on outcomes, but most of the time it feels like monitoring outputs without too much partnership working. It would be good to overhaul the process to focus on mutual benefit (for the vol org, the Council and the beneficiaries too). Some things just need to be done for accountability/following-the-public-pound reasons, and that's fine, but other things can be more collaborative, discursive and supportive. Consistency around link officer capacity and expertise would make a big difference to some organisations....*

Comments show strong support for more collaboration and the opportunity to work more as 'partners' rather than 'suppliers' of health and social care services.

"I am hoping that this project will be the first step to developing the areas discussed and I look forward to being part of this as a third sector representative, I only hope that organisations not normally involved in projects are asked to support rather than the usual larger companies that don't necessarily represent smaller more local organisations that have so many good practices in place and would love to develop these"

"It is acknowledged within our organisation that there is a need for change in how services are commissioned, monitored and evaluated. We are supportive of the fact that services will be commissioned based on an assessment of needs at local level but would welcome input as to how this will be undertaken. Moreover, it is our hope that the product of any such strategic assessment of needs would be shared with existing partners and prospective suppliers of services in order that we can plan effectively towards any change in service that maybe required. Moreover, we would suggest that there is a need for a more focussed approach to the planning of services that will be made available to individual clients, ensuring proper choice, acting as a gateway to all available services whereby each journey is managed and subject to regular review.

As an organisation that has been involved in delivering services on behalf of the Council for many years we consider that there is a need for us to be treated as a full partner as opposed to a 'supplier'. There are so many areas at present where we are barred from accessing council services and making use of resources that would offer far better value. At times we truly feel like outsiders who have to fend for themselves and seek solutions through other forms of recourse. If the current intransigence on the part of some areas of the council could be overcome it would lead to greater efficiencies and achievement of a true best value approach."

As noted previously we would very much welcome the opportunity to work much more in partnership with the HSCP, users of the service and other partners to collaborate on service design and delivery. ..

As a commissioned organisation, it would be nice to feel that we are more of a partner of the HSCP, rather than just funded to deliver something and report on it. We would be pleased to be consulted on the challenges facing the HSCP in terms of delivery of Health and Social Care and asked how we can help. We know (with some additional funding of course) there is much more we could be doing to help meet the demand for services and alleviate the pressures on Health and Social Care, however right now, the mechanism for demonstrating that and having those discussions just isn't there.

Several comments also relate to more security over funding, for example;

"As mentioned in the meeting. It would be beneficial to be allocated 3 year funding to offer more stability and enable better planning"

...The current short term funding arrangement acts as a significant hindrance in developing services when we cannot be confident of the longevity of funding, whilst the SLA is a 3 year agreement, funding is only advised on a year to year basis, having this level of uncertainty is not helpful nor is it conducive to service development as noted"

We are really looking forward to working on our new SLA and it reflecting what is needed. It would be good if we went bank to 3 year funding as this provides some degree of security and increases efficiency.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report has provided a baseline of provider views on mapping, SLAs, monitoring and evaluation, and role of the link officer. They will be evaluated again on conclusion of the reimagining work to monitor progress and could potentially form part of future Monitoring and Evaluation processes to ensure that Service Level Agreements and M&E Processes are robust and continuously improving¹.

The level of enthusiasm from providers to feed into the reimagining process is clear, over 80% of providers responded to the questionnaire and all indicated that they considered the project to have the potential to bring about positive change.

Comments indicate an appetite for change and for collaboration, as such, the recommendations in this report, largely relate to the need to explore this further through a series of workshops with clearly defined objectives in order to jointly respond to the challenges highlighted here.

Whilst the information from the mapping meetings themselves will provide an important source of information from which stakeholder engagement events can be planned, there are a number of key themes emerging from the questionnaire which should be taken forward by the transforming commissioning working group.

- 1. Explore how the mapping tool could be reviewed and embedded into annual Monitoring and Evaluation processes to ensure that services are systematically mapped and aligned to strategic priorities. Ensure that the tool is viewed as an opportunity for open discussion around building capacity and provides quality information to inform strategic planning.*
- 2. Use feedback to draft new SLA template, outlining rationale for changes and develop guidance notes to clarify expectations in terms of level of detail and content required within each section of the proposed form. Develop approach to setting out meaningful outcomes.*
- 3. Plan and facilitate workshops to look at draft SLA template, guidance and process with link officers and interested providers, link to FVA to ensure that concerns from across the sector are heard*
- 4. Plan and facilitate workshops with link officers and interested providers to look at strengthening approach to monitoring and evaluation. Specifically, to explore*
 - a. Frequency (and timing) of reports*
 - b. Level and type of data required from each service type to measure outputs and outcomes more consistently (and enable capacity and quality to be measured systematically).*
 - c. Measuring meaningful outcomes*
 - d. Annual Monitoring Form/ reporting template (layout)*

¹ Potential to replace or update the 3 year M&E feedback form.

e. Linking M&E to SLA / service design briefs/ strategic planning

- 5. Consider the role of 'development officer' and support available to organisations who do not have a designated link officer.*
- 6. Workshop with Link Officers to provide opportunity to discuss the challenges associated with the role and potential support or changes required to enable expectations to be met.*

Feedback to participants

The feedback from this questionnaire combined with the qualitative information from the mapping meetings will be used to set out clear objectives for a number of stakeholder engagement events.

This report will be made available to organisations who responded to the survey via the webpage (www.fva.org/reimagining_health_and_social_care.asp) and key results will be reported in the upcoming provider Sway.

To ensure that participants feel valued and informed about how their feedback has been used to generate change we will

- Thank providers who responded to the survey via the provider Sway
- Include a 'You said, we did' in the provider Sway to include the recommendations that have been made in this report and next steps
- Invite providers to workshops when objectives and dates have been agreed.

Appendix 1: Email

Sent on behalf of Nicola Broad

(Organisation) : Reimagining Third Sector Commissioning Mapping meeting

Held on (date)

Dear

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me and complete the service mapping exercise for the Reimagining Third Sector Commissioning Transformation Project. It has been both informative and moving to hear about the ways in which you support people across Fife, and to listen to some fantastic examples of how services have responded throughout the pandemic to continue to provide effective, person-centred support. I have also very much enjoyed discussing your aspirations and views on the transformation project more generally. Your views are invaluable and will shape future engagement activities and ultimately guide the direction of travel for the transformation project.

I would be very grateful if you could complete a short survey to give feedback about our meeting, and to tell us what you think about your current (2021-22) Service Level Agreement, and our approach to monitoring and evaluation. It is a key objective of the Transforming Commissioning Workstream to review and strengthen existing arrangements, so we would like to obtain a baseline of provider views at this time. We will ask the same questions again when changes have been implemented to monitor whether or not changes have had the desired impact on improving the support we provide to organisations.

The survey will close on **21 March 2022** and should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. The survey is anonymous, and all providers are being asked to give views as it is really important that we capture views from as many providers as possible.

Please [Click Here](#) to give your views.

I very much look forward to working together throughout this transformation project and speaking again soon.

Kind Regards

Nicola Broad

email: nicola.broad@fife.gov.uk

Planning Coordinator, Reimagining Third Sector Commissioning

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

<https://forms.office.com/r/AU80tbnrqv>

Appendix 3: Full Comments

Mapping Meeting Comments (Question 2)

1. The purpose was clearly explained and a positive two-way discussion took place.
2. It was clearly explained the purpose of the meeting and overall aim of the project felt confident that it will benefit services and people who access those services. I felt listened to
3. The mapping meeting was of value to discuss and understand the objectives of both parties
4. Hi, with regard to the third statement above it is too early to say if the project will bring benefits. A domain that gave an option of neither agree or disagree would be useful. The survey forces a choice.
5. It was a very positive meeting, Nicola clearly has an excellent knowledge of Health and Social Care. She was a pleasure to meet.
6. I felt our voice was heard in an empathic and understanding way. Nicola made me feel relaxed and discussed fully the replies to questions.
7. I hope and believe that this 'this to be a positive project that will bring benefits to your organisation and your service users' as above but will not know for sure until the project is completed
8. I felt really listened to and felt good that it is about getting what service users need
9. Really enjoyed the meeting and felt enthused at the end.
It would have been good to have an indication prior to meeting on H&SCP & funders views on what they would like to see reimaged to assist us in looking at creative ways to support the early process.
10. Nicola Broad gave ample time for the Mapping Meeting, and was patient and attentive in listening to my views and the difficulties faced by the organisation during the pandemic and our plans, aims and objectives for moving forward.
11. it was good to put a face to the name and to discuss fully what the project will bring to organisations.
12. Ample time was given to consider responses to the stock questions. I felt there was a genuine interest in the service we provide and the challenges we face doing so.
13. It allayed fears about the purpose of the meeting

-
14. It was a great opportunity to share kasp thoughts on how funds are distributed, new ways that soft outcomes can be shared and gain a better understanding of how the partnership works and makes decisions
15. It was a pleasure to work with you and discuss ideas and inform you about the work of our project.
16. My views were listened to.
17. The mapping meeting was really helpful in understanding the objectives of the project but also as an opportunity to provide an update on the work that our service has done in direct response to Covid and the challenges encountered therein.
18. It was extremely positive to hear that the experiences of people who use services and their voices are central to this project.
19. Very impressed with Nicola's professionalism and enthusiasm for this project. I appreciated the opportunity to be involved.
20. It was a very interesting meeting and we felt listened to, thank you for taking the time to meet with us.
21. It was well handled and staff were friendly
22. This was a good opportunity to meet up with our partners.
23. I found Nicola to be very approachable and easy to talk to. Everything was explained well.
24. Really impressed with the communication that preceded the mapping meeting. Moreover, I felt that the planning coordinator was very open and transparent as to the purpose of the project and the likely impact that it would have on our organisation. As much has yet to be established in relation to how commissioning will actually take place we are naturally still a bit unclear as to the benefits that the new approaches will ultimately deliver. The potential for benefit is nonetheless acknowledged.
25. Positive meeting with Nicola who clearly understood the services we deliver and the current gaps
26. time was taken to listen and sharing of experience/ideas
27. The mapping exercise will help identify duplication and gaps in service. It will help streamline services and ensure there are equitable services throughout Fife to ensure the residents of Fife feel supported no matter where they live. A very worthwhile project in my view.
28. It was difficult to cover a lot of ground during the session due to the various activities *** does, the different reach and scale of different activities and the wide range of beneficiaries impacted. Mapping is a challenging thing to do, especially when services are changing and responding to things like Covid, hybrid-working and so on. It would be great if this exercise could be regarded not as a one-off, but as the start of a useful resource that can be maintained, updated and made available in different ways for
-

different stakeholders. *** would be keen to support that and bring technical and other skills to the activity.

Service Level Agreements and how they could be improved (Question 5)

1. *The current SLA will have to be updated as we have made some changes to how we operate*
2. *The current agreements require a full overhaul, there is far too much emphasis on number and not nearly enough detail on what each service does and what benefits this has to the individual and the carer involved.*
3. *I feel that some questions are repetitive. Could it be condensed?*
4. *The SLA is very repetitive and could be better laid out so that there is more room for descriptors. We have a joint SLA with E&CS which can be confusing particularly for Board members who expect each SLA to be separate and forget that we are talking about 2 separate funding streams*
5. *I think going forward there is an opportunity to review SLA,s into a more two way contract with better detailed obligations, in particular for funding resources and salary reviews.*

New government policy will also impact on SLA due to requirement for MAT Standards and rapid access clinics being only two of the new initiatives being implemented.

A more meaningful modern approach, that allows for two way dialogue between funders and organisations.
6. *Any new SLA should include how service users should exit or be discharged/move on from our service, it is not clear in the present document.*
7. *Consolidation of some of our funding streams may make it more easily managed and as goals are identical on several streams.*
8. *obviously due to the pandemic there was parts of the service level that we could not meet although no fault of our own we had to compromise and alter roles and ways of working to ensure we still provided a service to all our members.*
9. *The focus needs to shift from number of outputs and service users to the impact and benefit of the service on lives.*
10. *SLA Should also gather soft outcomes. Its currently more focused on stats which is important.*
11. *I don't think I have a service agreement document.*
12. *Whilst current SLA is clear on the outcomes to be achieved and the measures associated with these it is apparent that these are very high level and maybe don't best reflect the outcomes that users of the services themselves would wish to achieve. In looking towards future revision/development of SLA's it would be good to use this opportunity to have greater user involvement/coproduction.*

13. *Outputs and Outcomes should be more service user focused and flexibility is required to capture the individual benefits and stories of people whose lives have improved as a result of the service. It is difficult to define some of the outcomes that happen in our organisations.*
14. *I've had to disagree regarding outcomes - our service is confidential and anonymous so it's extremely difficult to measure outcomes at a local level.*
15. *We review the SLA yearly and I have always felt our feedback is taken into account at these meetings. Our link officer has always been very helpful and supportive of our services and challenges.*
16. *Our SLA has too many sections and does not allow for documenting how different parts of the service are being provided to the same person. It is very number orientated and does not reflect the quality or variety of work done. The SLA needs to be simplified and the outcomes looked at afresh taking into account what we do now as a service compared to what was provided when the first SLA was drawn up.*
17. *My comments are mostly negative for this section as currently we do not have an up to date SLA for 2021/22. For a number of reasons it hasn't been progressed this year and only last week we got information asking us to consider it and to meet with the contracts officer to discuss further. As a result it is not possible to comment on the current positively on the current SLA as the one previous to this is now out of date*
18. *Our SLA needs to reflect the service we are currently delivering post-covid. We engaged with all our clients and this is what people want/need. SLA's need to be more person-centred (like befriending) and reflect client's outcomes more. There also needs to be more flexibility within in the SLA to alter service delivery to meet client's current needs.*
19. *There is definite scope for the format and content of the SLA to be improved. By and large it has remained the same over a number of years and there is very little by way of meaningful outcomes linked to the service that we provide. We are particularly keen on working with the Council to develop a means of monitoring and evaluating progress of our clients against meaningful outcomes.*
20. *They can be more detailed and outcome focussed regarding how our work supports the strategic priorities in Fife. We also need to consider service security where commitments are made for longer than a year on year basis.*
21. *The DSDC does not have an SLA to refer to.*
22. *I've been asking for changes to SLAs and the overall process for many years and have had some discussions around changing them at various points. I've made some suggestions about practical changes to the SLA itself, but the problems are mostly with the process, timing and people involved, rather than the document itself. I've been excluded from the group looking at SLAs as part of this process, but I've been invited onto every other group there is as part of this reimagining process. I've always taken feedback to the Council about concerns and frustrations from the sector. The whole process of drafting, reviewing and implementing SLAs could do with refreshment and*

modernisation, including the role and activity of link officers, which is largely perceived of adding no value to funded organisations.

Monitoring and Evaluation and how it could be improved (Question 7)

1. *By improving the service level agreements this should in turn have a natural effect on providing improved processes for monitoring and evaluation purposes.*
2. *Although we can contact our Lnk Worker at any time, I feel the current monitoring and evaluation support is intermittent.*
3. *We are funded April - March but have to write and submit our evaluation and monitoring forms in Jan/Feb including info for up to the Dec. This is 9 months of the actual year funded.*
It is unclear when we have to hand in our reports as we are asked for them at different dates each year - for this year, I haven't been asked for our report yet (nor have I been told the reporting period is changing) so I have worked on it within the same format as before so the report will be ready when requested.
I did enquire as to when the report was due and what format it was to be in (as I believed some work had gone into reshaping this) but was told that my funding officer did not know yet and to use the same format as last year.
The layout of the monitoring form could be better laid out - there seems to be a fair amount of wasted space within the form with qualitative info squeezed into a comparatively small space rather than laid out across the whole page - this either discourages you from writing much or looks untidy as so much is placed in a narrow column
I believe that rolling reports submitted quarterly or every 6-months would enable H&SCP + ECS to monitor and support/rectify any issues more swiftly and would mean that a whole financial years submission could be made as the 9 month submission would still exist. This method would also support organisations to fully monitor their Agreements
4. *I think improvement could be made on "Work collaboratively with other organisations to share good practice and provide effective, holistic support to individuals"*

Maybe more sessions, groups, forums ??? for front line workers not just managers
5. *We have effective M & E processes due to the specialist work we do, but this is not often included in the service level agreement in any detail. It may be useful to allow for a feedback from each service using the evaluation tools that fit their area of expertise which can then be fitted into broader aims and objectives.*
6. *Monitoring & Evaluation might be less onerous on all parties if quarterly reports/updates could be submitted showing work done, any gaps identified and identifying challenges or difficulties as they arise rather than 3, 6 or 12 months later.*
7. *We have not been monitored in the past.*

8. *Whilst we would agree that there is scope within the monitoring and evaluation framework to achieve the function and objectives set out the impact of Covid has meant that opportunity to do this meaningfully has been severely restricted. As we emerge from the pandemic and as restrictions ease we would welcome greater opportunity to work much more collaboratively with the HSCP and other Third Sector partners. Having greater opportunity to network and learn what others are doing would also be welcomed.*
9. *There needs to be space for creative flexible approaches to working and to monitoring,. Case studies and personal lived experience best demonstrates the impact of services. The good relationship we have had with our Contracts officer have meant many of these things have been positive and we could have open, good conversations.*
10. *It is hard to show the whole benefit of the service and we sometimes feel limited to those planned outcomes when in reality some outcomes have to change midway to respond to need. That pulls down performance potentially, but we are serving people in the way that meets their need and still delivers a positive outcome - perhaps not the positive outcome that has been narrowly defined in the SLA.*
11. *The process feels as if it is merely a tick-box exercise, rather than an evaluation process.*
12. *Currently we have little feedback from the 6 monthly reports that we give to the council so we have no way of really knowing whether we are doing what we should be doing or not. As a result the answers to most of the questions are negative. I appreciate that what is set out above is what a monitoring framework should be doing but seeing as we don't get feedback on the reports it is difficult to be positive*
13. *Monitoring and evaluation can seem like a "tick box" exercise. Comments / feedback given in the past have never been formally addressed (or so it seems). There needs to be balance between funder's outcomes and client outcomes.*
14. *Obviously COVID has impacted greatly on how current services are being monitored, however setting this aside there is a need for an increased focus on the achievement of meaningful outcomes and the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework that more closely reflects progress against these. I believe that there is scope for a collaborative approach to be taken towards the development of such a framework that would more accurately represent the achievements that are being made. In our view the relationship between the finder and supplier needs to be stronger with more regular contact being maintained to reflect on progress that is being achieved. Moreover at present, as a supplier you cannot help but feel that you are ignored to an extent and not treated as a full partner. That said the levels of communication taking place with partners at an operational level are meaningful and productive and are focussed on achievement of best outcomes for clients.*
15. *In our experience, the annual monitoring and evaluation has involved us completing an update within the SLA document, with no feedback provided other than funding for the following year confirmed. Whilst we are obviously happy with the continuation funding being confirmed, it would be nice to feel our, and our service users, comments have been listened to and any ideas for service development taken on board. A*

reporting template designed for the provider, rather than designed for the Contracts Officer, would be much more useful.

16. I know it may be time consuming but I do believe personal contact provides a greater depth to the findings. It provides more of an interactive monitoring process, where there can be a greater understanding of the needs of the residents of Fife and provide more flexible services to address this need. I feel this was proven during the mapping exercise interview where a greater depth of information was shared.

17. We don't particularly see it as helpful to what we do. We understand the need to be accountable and demonstrate use of public money, so we see the need for something. The focus seems to be on monitoring outputs, and it doesn't feel like it is designed to help us. It can be overly ambitious in trying to monitor and evaluate a lot of activity - is all of it necessary?!

Role of the link officer (Question 10)

1. Positive relationship with our link officer and responds very promptly with any queries we have. Link officer has great understanding of the service and people we support

2. We have an excellent link officer

3. Understand due to Covid the difficulty of support being consistent however would suggest regular face to face meetings with coordinator and committee member to improve this aspect. Link worker to have a better understanding of charities purpose and aims.

4. Our Link Officer will answer queries promptly and will send info to us that they are asked to send, they are very approachable and have made suggestions during reporting times. However, they have not attended a Board meeting since before June 2020 and I believe before that the attendance was as little as twice since early 2019, this is excused as our having meetings not on a normal working day (although no-one has suggested changing these or changing officers). I wonder whether workload may be an issue. Potentially clearly defining this role to both the officer and the organisations may help.

5. We very much appreciate and welcome the valuable support that we receive and have received throughout the years from our Link Officer /s

6. Our Link Officer is always available, is approachable, helpful, flexible and easy to talk to. I am confident in her abilities and if she has been unsure or unable to answer any of my past queries, she will always talk to others who can answer certain query or help

7. She is very involved in our processes and responds quickly to any enquiry.

8. Xxx we now have a new link officer but as there has been no face to face meetings at this point apart from zoom meetings it has been difficult to build a working relationship up but hopefully this will change as restrictions eases.

9. *Xxx link officer is very approachable and regularly attends our board meetings. She is able to update trustees about Fife Council policy, funding decisions and has a good handle on xxx activities.*

10. *As previously stated that impact of the Covid19 pandemic has been that contact and opportunity to meet has been restricted, that coupled with the pressures of dealing with and responding to ever changing situation has meant that everyone's abilities have been severely restricted in having any meaningful evaluation/discussions etc.*

11. *We have recently been inviting our Link officer to Fife Board meetings which has been positive.*

12. *meetings pre covid*

13. *Our link officer does not work on the day our board meetings are held.*

14. *Again, I'm sorry to sound so negative but given the lack of SLA, the lack of feedback from the Council it is difficult to be positive about our links with the Contract officer over the years. I appreciate that the past couple of years have been difficult for a number of reasons but in fairness it was pretty similar prior to the Pandemic. It would be helpful if the link officer was part of the ongoing discussions about setting outcomes, understanding the service, and a sense that they were connected in some way to the service and Fife council as a link. At the minute it feels like for the council they are an extra who are often not considered until they have to include them. It felt like when we changed link officers a few years back that this might change and initially it did feel more connected but in reality I don't feel that much has changed and the pandemic may have a lot to do with that.*

15. *xxx is very helpful and efficient at dealing with any queries. If she doesn't know something, she finds out. Sometimes it feels as if Link Officer aren't kept in the loop with updates and changes so communication could be better.*

16. *Obviously, COVID has impacted greatly on the ability of the link officer to be as actively involved with organisations and whilst we very much value their assistance it is apparent that they are somewhat limited in the time that they can spend with the likes of ourselves and other services operating within the sector as a result of various competing demands on their time. Beyond this, the lack of definition within current SLA's make it difficult for them to undertake any meaningful evaluation of the effectiveness of the supplier and what they have achieved. The hope is that this will be addressed through the reimagination process. Accordingly, in our opinion the role of the link officer could benefit from their having the opportunity to dedicate more time with organisations that they are responsible for. This in turn would allow for a greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and ensuring that tangible progress is made towards the achievement of outcomes for clients. Moreover, whilst our link officer is always willing to help organisations such as our own to overcome issues and problems, at times they are unable to overcome barriers to progress that exist elsewhere within the authority that inhibit progress. At times also some issues of importance appear to get lost at higher levels within the authority, again inhibiting progress, despite an undoubted willingness on the part of the link officer to progress*

on our behalf. Notwithstanding the above we very much value the function that is undertaken by the link officer.

17. We've been amazingly lucky to have xxx as our Link Officer for a number of years, and she's excellent. Having her involved in board discussions, to be able to contact her etc. has been invaluable.

As a representative body though, I know that this is not how most organisations feel about their Link Officer. The Link Officer role and value is of key concern to many, and is an area where a lot of improvements could be made. We get involved in situations where the knowledge, involvement and capacity of link officers has varied dramatically.

Further Comments (Question 11)

1. I am hoping that this project will be the first step to developing the areas discussed and I look forward to being part of this as a third sector representative, I only hope that organisations not normally involved in projects are asked to support rather than the usual larger companies that don't necessarily represent smaller more local organisations that have so many good practices in place and would love to develop these.

2. Regular and precise communication on all aspects of the above. Face to face meetings to discuss difficulties with the above. Include in monitoring more regarding the impact services are having on the individual rather than targets.

3. Our experience of H&SC planning of services has been that decisions can take a substantial amount of time to be made resulting in awards being notified to us partially through the funding year they have been given for, we have also experienced new funding arriving in the bank and we have been unclear what that has been for as the contracts office have not informed us in time.

To improve there could be a robust timetable for all aspects with improved paperwork which allows a more economical use of paper/pages.

Also we could consider merging aspects of the SLA so it is not disjointed/separated into different aspects of the service but instead reflects the overall delivery to our service users allowing for a more holistic reporting format, evaluation and service improvement.

4. More active involvement of 3rd sector partners in support of a unified operational support of all services.

5. To continue to provide strong links, and longer-term service level agreements

6. As mentioned in the meeting. It would be beneficial to be allocated 3 year funding to offer more stability and enable better planning

7. *As noted previously we would very much welcome the opportunity to work much more in partnership with the HSCP, users of the service and other partners to collaborate on service design and delivery. The current short term funding arrangement acts as a significant hindrance in developing services when we cannot be confident of the longevity of funding, whilst the SLA is a 3 year agreement, funding is only advised on a year to year basis, having this level of uncertainty is not helpful nor is it conducive to service development as noted.*
8. *Reflective of the views and wishes of Service Users.
Strengthen service users input and voice in this process.*
9. *I feel the whole process needs to be looked at to find a meaningful way to ensure the SLA is clear, easier to monitor and hopefully enables us to have better links with our funders, giving us a clearer way to identify how best we can develop our services.*
10. *I would suggest that once a 6 monthly report is submitted then at the very least an acknowledgment is received. A meeting to discuss the report would be helpful where there is an opportunity to discuss the content and any issues that come from it, the past six months, the upcoming 6 months etc etc. This hasn't happened for a number of years and does leave you with the feeling of "What's the point". Having said all that the pandemic has not helped, although in reality it was pretty similar prior to it happening. We would welcome the opportunity for regular 6 monthly meetings with the contracts officer, link person for services to discuss the reports and answer any questions, discuss any issues and move forward together.*
11. *We are really looking forward to working on our new SLA and it reflecting what is needed. It would be good if we went bank to 3 year funding as this provides some degree of security and increases efficiency.*
12. *It is acknowledged within our organisation that there is a need for change in how services are commissioned, monitored and evaluated. We are supportive of the fact that services will be commissioned based on an assessment of needs at local level but would welcome input as to how this will be undertaken. Moreover, it is our hope that the product of any such strategic assessment of needs would be shared with existing partners and prospective suppliers of services in order that we can plan effectively towards any change in service that maybe required. Moreover, we would suggest that there is a need for a more focussed approach to the planning of services that will be made available to individual clients, ensuring proper choice, acting as a gateway to all available services whereby each journey is managed and subject to regular review. Also, as an organisation that has been involved in delivering services on behalf of the Council for many years we consider that there is a need for us to be treated as a full partner as opposed to a 'supplier'. There are so many areas at present where we are barred from accessing council services and making use of resources that would offer far better value. At times we truly feel like outsiders who have to fend for themselves and seek solutions through other forms of recourse. If the current intransigence on the part of some areas of the council could be overcome it would lead to greater efficiencies and achievement of a true best value approach.*
13. *As a commissioned organisation, it would be nice to feel that we are more of a partner of the HSCP, rather than just funded to deliver something and report on it. We would*

be pleased to be consulted on the challenges facing the HSCP in terms of delivery of Health and Social Care and asked how we can help. We know (with some additional funding of course) there is much more we could be doing to help meet the demand for services and alleviate the pressures on Health and Social Care, however right now, the mechanism for demonstrating that and having those discussions just isn't there.

14. I think the key to planning, monitoring and developing services is to understand the services being provided. What impact does it have on the lives of those living in Fife. Meet with the organisation in person or contact via a teams call for that personal interaction. Gather feedback from the service user and the impact the service is having on their lives and what would help further. Work with the outcomes of the mapping exercise to improve and streamline services to ensure they are accessible to all.

15. For a while the rhetoric has been about partnership working and a focus on outcomes, but most of the time it feels like monitoring outputs without too much partnership working. It would be good to overhaul the process to focus on mutual benefit (for the vol org, the Council and the beneficiaries too). Some things just need to be done for accountability/following-the-public-pound reasons, and that's fine, but other things can be more collaborative, discursive and supportive. Consistency around link officer capacity and expertise would make a big difference to some organisations...
