

Elevate-Glasgow PSP Evaluation

Third Evaluation Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

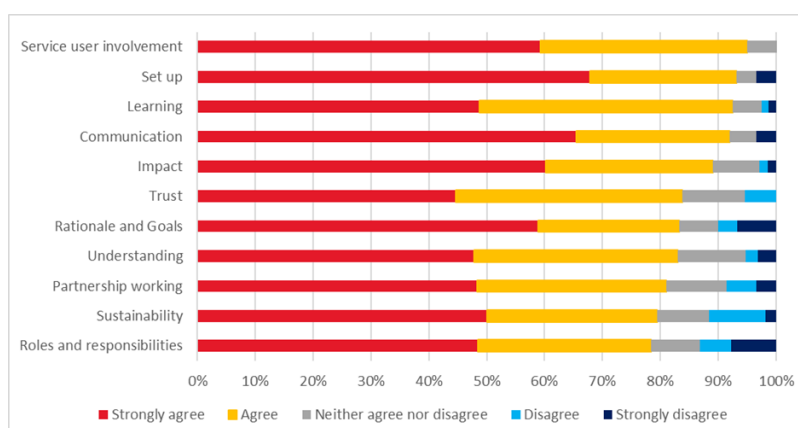
May 2020

Introduction

- 1 Iconic Consulting has been evaluating Elevate-Glasgow Public Social Partnership (PSP) since December 2017. The formative evaluation has two aims. Firstly, to evaluate the delivery, impact and outcomes achieved by the PSP in supporting those in recovery from problematic substance use to gain access to personal development, learning, training, volunteering and employment opportunities. Secondly, a process evaluation from initial concept to delivery.
- 2 As a formative evaluation findings have previously been reported in May 2018 and June 2019 to inform Elevate’s ongoing implementation and development. This is the third, and final, annual evaluation report. It focuses on progress during 2019/20 as well as taking a reflective view of progress as a whole since the PSP was established.
- 3 A mixed methods approach was adopted for the evaluation involving: observation of PSP meetings; consultation with 9 PSP partners, 4 delivery staff, and 10 participants; a review of relevant documents and participant data; and an organisational self-assessment survey completed by 32 individuals across the PSP partners.

Strategic issues

- 4 Our self-assessment survey provides a quick reference guide on the PSP’s relative strengths. It shows that, overall, partners were very positive about Elevate. More than 9 out of 10 respondents rated the following issues highly: service user involvement (95%), set-up & development (93%), learning (93%) and communication (92%). The lowest ratings related to roles & responsibilities (78%) and sustainability (79%) although it should be noted that more than three quarters of respondents still rated these issues positively. Broadly speaking partners rated themes more positively in 2020 than they had in 2018. There were particularly marked improvements in sustainability, learning and service user involvement.



Sustainability

- 5 2019/20 has been a momentous year for Elevate-Glasgow PSP and, more broadly, application of the PSP model in Scotland. In December 2019, NHSGG&C tendered for an employability service for people recovering from problematic alcohol and drug misuse and the contract was subsequently awarded to a joint bid involving 17 of Elevate’s partner organisations. The contract initially covers a three year period from April 2020 to March 2023 with the option to extend for a further two years

“This is a fantastic outcome that no other PSP has achieved to date. The Elevate partners need to share this outcome, especially with the Scottish Government as it shows the (PSP) model can work... The NHS should be very proud of this and they should take great credit for initiating the PSP and seeing it through to the commissioning of a new service. It brings everything to a conclusion and should be seen as an example of good practice”.

Elevate stakeholder

subject to funding. This situation is in contrast to other PSPs in Scotland where the public sector partner has tended not to sustain the service after the pilot period, despite this being an integral part of the model. By commissioning a new service, NHSGG&C has demonstrated a commitment to improve the employability of people in recovery in Glasgow City and we commend them for this. NHSGG&C has also ensured that all stages of the PSP process were addressed: 1) Identify & create, 2) Service design, 3) Pilot, and 4) Sustaining the service.

- 6 Although there are positive lessons to draw from Elevate’s experience regarding the PSP model, there were also challenges in terms of sustainability and procurement which mirror experiences reported in the [Review of the Strategic PSP Model in Scotland](#) (Scottish Government, 2018). The review noted there was no commitment among public sector partners to a collaborative approach to commissioning. Not only did NHSGG&C’s approach follow this pattern it was also notable for the limited involvement of service users and reflection with service providers which, in our view, was not in keeping with the collaborative and co-production ethos of PSPs.
- 7 The Scottish Government has provided significant financial support to Elevate worth £100,000 per annum since 2017. The funding is confirmed annually and is currently due to end in 2021. It is therefore imperative that Elevate partners assess the future of the operational elements not covered by the new NHSGG&C contract, and the strategic/partnership elements of the PSP.

Service user involvement

- 8 Elevate stakeholders rated service user involvement more positively than any other aspect of the PSP with 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. This is particularly noteworthy as the issue had not been as highly rated previously, for example the overall rating in 2018 stood at 80%, and our previous evaluation reports have recommended actions to enhance service user involvement. The most significant development, and the most likely cause of the improved rating, was the establishment of the Elevators Co-production Group.
- 9 The group held a development session in July 2019 and has met regularly since. Initially the group met monthly which progressed to fortnightly by the end of 2019, and weekly video conferences during the COVID-19 lockdown. The group produced an Action Plan setting out their aims, purpose, goals and actions.
- 10 A number of Elevators shared their views and experiences as part of this year’s evaluation. It was clear participation in the group had benefitted them as they highlighted improvements in self-confidence. The group has provided a focus for members and their pride and satisfaction in maintaining it was clear. It was also evident members were putting their existing skills to good use and developing new ones in organising meetings and activities.

“We’re putting ideas forward to them (Elevate Support Team) about what we can do, so the workers are having less of a role... Six months ago I wouldn’t have had the confidence to join the group, I just wouldn’t have done it... The people in the group are very passionate about promoting Elevate, we’ve all got experience of what it’s like, we’ve walked the walk”.

Elevate participant

- 11 The Support Team played an important role in establishing the Elevators group and supporting participants. Encouragingly the team has stepped back over time which has empowered members to take a more active role in organising the meetings and activities. It

is also encouraging that members are able to undertake Community Achievement Awards accredited by Glasgow Kelvin College, to evidence their participation and learning in the group – this is very much in keeping with Elevate’s ethos.

- 12 The Elevators are planning to engage other participants in the future to find out about what they need and want from the service. Significantly, steps had been taken to embed the group into Elevate’s decision making processes so the Elevators have a real voice in ongoing service development and delivery.

Learning

- 13 Learning is an integral part of the PSP model and it has been shown to be one of Elevate’s strengths. It was the third highest rated of the themes on our PSP assessment with 93% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. Stakeholders identified the formative evaluation and service user involvement as key factors in the positive learning environment within Elevate. Several highlighted the benefits of commissioning an independent formative evaluation at the outset with the annual reports providing learning and recommendations that have been actioned as Elevate progressed. Some stakeholders reported they had benefited professionally from their involvement in the PSP and had learnt from the experience.

“I learnt so much, I’ve come back like a superhero! The participants learnt so much too, they got like three years’ experience in three weeks by living and working abroad. They gained so much self-confidence and self-esteem about how valuable they are”.

Elevate & Erasmus+ stakeholder

- 14 The Erasmus+ programme has evolved into an important part of Elevate and it provided additional learning opportunities for staff and participants.

Partnership working

- 15 A genuine commitment to partnership working has been one of the defining features of Elevate-Glasgow PSP. Partners have attended Steering and Operational Group meetings regularly and engaged positively throughout often putting the needs of Elevate as a whole ahead of their own organisation. They have taken the time to reflect on emerging lessons

“To come from nothing to establish itself as the go-to partnership for employability for people in recovery, in a place like Glasgow, is a remarkable achievement”.

Elevate stakeholder

and sought to address them where necessary. Communications and trust have generally been positive and highly regarded by stakeholders.

- 16 Glasgow Council on Alcohol provided strong leadership and an inclusive approach which undoubtedly helped facilitate partnership working.

- 17 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde was a key partner throughout providing the initial drive for the PSP as well as significant funding and in-kind-support. NHSGG&C deserve credit for commissioning a new employability service, although the process involved limited communication, service user involvement and joint reflection with partners. This was an example of tensions experienced throughout the evaluation regarding NHSGG&C’s role and communications which, at times, undermined trust among partners.

- 18 Notwithstanding this, from a strategic perspective, Elevate-Glasgow PSP has been significant. In a relatively short space of time it has developed into a strategically important partnership. A handful of stakeholders suggested the Group could have a stronger focus on strategic issues in the future given the rich insight it has on employability among people in

recovery and the presence of senior staff from a cross-section of relevant organisations.

- 19 The Operational Group was established in early 2019 following a recommendation in our first report. The Group has been a positive addition to the PSP and has been welcomed by stakeholders who highlighted this as an example of how Elevate has addressed learning brought to light by the evaluation. Short Life Working Groups, reporting to the Operational Group, was a key part of Elevate’s re-organisation. To date this has led to establishment of the Elevators Co-production group and an Understanding Stigma Short Life Working Group.

Delivery and impact

- 20 In terms of delivery, Elevate’s greatest success has been the provision of person-centred support to people in recovery which bridges a gap between recovery-orientated support and employability support to access training, learning, volunteering and employment. The benefit of the support has been clearly demonstrated throughout this evaluation as have the skills, positivity and flexibility of the Support Team that delivered it.

- 21 To the end of March 2020, Elevate achieved the following:
- 649 people in recovery supported
 - 172 achieving qualifications
 - 131 volunteering
 - 55 undertaking paid and unpaid SVQ-accredited work placements, and
 - 142 securing employment including paid work placements and self-employment.

- 22 Overall 22% of Elevate participants entered employment which is a positive result given the nature and extent of barriers facing people in recovery from problematic alcohol and drug use. Comparing job outcomes between different employability services is challenging due to differences in their focus and intensity. Nonetheless information on other, broadly similar, services found job conversion rates varied from 42% to 14%.

“There are so many different options available to participants, no matter what stage of recovery a person is at. You can come in at the right level for each person. That’s the unique thing about Elevate, the variety of options and the support to progress right through, it is different to everything else that is available in the city”.

Elevate stakeholder

- 23 Elevate has become a source of health and social care workers with valuable lived experience. Approximately 8 out of 10 jobs secured by participants have been in this sector such as support workers, addiction workers, and recovery worker. This reflects a strong desire among those in recovery to support others with their recovery, and linked to this, the predominance of work placements offered in this field by Elevate’s third sector partners.

- 24 Whilst the above is a positive feature which should be retained by Elevate in the future, there also appears to be significant scope to widen the employment outcomes into other roles and sectors where countless opportunities exist in Glasgow. This will require a proactive approach from partners to identify opportunities and the skills/attributes required by employers, and subsequently develop appropriate support to help participants access these opportunities.

25 Numerous Elevate participants also reported improvements in a range of softer outcomes including improvements in self-confidence, mental health and wellbeing, family relationships, and skills. These significant impacts should not be underestimated.

“My time with Elevate has really improved me as a person. Yes I had a good career and I’ve got organisational skills and all that, but without [Employment Support Worker] my mental health would have suffered”.

Elevate participant

26 The average cost per participant of £1,341 and cost per job of £6,127 represents excellent value for money, in our view. Although the full financial benefits of Elevate participants moving into employment are not known, the example of a participant moving from ESA into full-time employment as a support worker would see their income increase by £12,285 while government finances would benefit by £6,083 from increased income tax and National Insurance revenues and ESA savings. Elevate may also contribute to preventing relapse and the significant additional costs associated with it.

Conclusions and recommendations

27 Overall, Elevate-Glasgow PSP has supported approximately 650 people in recovery from problematic substance use to access a range of personal development, learning, training, and volunteering opportunities with over a fifth moving into employment. A partnership made up of third, public and private sector organisations collaborated successfully throughout the process to provide clear strategic direction. We therefore conclude Elevate-Glasgow PSP fulfilled its aim to *‘increase employability opportunities for individuals in recovery, reduce the number of adults in recovery who are unemployed and to make a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Glasgow City’s local people and communities’*.

28 The report includes a small number of recommendations, shown below. They should, however, be viewed in the context of a very positive evaluation report overall.

Recommendation 1: Elevate Steering Group oversees a systemic, objective assessment of: a) the operational elements not covered by the new NHSGG&C contract, and b) the strategic/partnership elements of the PSP.

Recommendation 2: The Elevators group continues to be supported to be a fully embedded part of Elevate’s decision making process.

Recommendation 3: The review of the Steering Group’s future role includes an option to increase its strategic focus and influence, potentially involving an expansion of its membership.

Recommendation 4: The Operational Group revisit the purpose and role of the Group to ensure future meetings are focused on adding value to Elevate and improving employability services for people recovery in Glasgow.

Recommendation 5: Stronger strategic links are developed between Elevate and the City’s strategic employability and recovery structures.

Recommendation 6: Elevate partners identify local employment opportunities and the skills/attributes required by employers, and develop appropriate support to help participants access these opportunities, working with employers and training providers where appropriate.

Recommendation 7: Partners utilise the positive findings which clearly demonstrates Elevate’s value for money in terms of cost per job and savings to public sector spending, when promoting the service and seeking additional funding.