Overview of the Evaluation Capability Building Project

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What is the evaluation capability building project?

- Office for Students commissioned project to:
  - Assess individual NCOP Evaluation Strategies for Phase 2
  - To determine where there are gaps in capability to deliver robust and effective local impact and process evaluation
  - To work with NCOP partnerships to build a community of practice
  - To develop training and support to close capability gaps
  - To support partnerships with producing and sharing robust evaluation evidence.
- Who are the project team?

How does the evaluation capability building project relate to / differ from the CFE evaluation?

- CFE – responsible for overall NCOP programme impact evaluation

- This project:

  ◦ Initial stage – assessment of evaluation strategies

  ◦ Ongoing project to support the development of evaluation capability based on gaps identified in this initial assessment

  ◦ Working closely with individual partnerships to help them implement their strategy and develop and share effective evaluation practice

  ◦ Capability building project to support partnerships with producing their own robust evidence to contribute to sector-wide evidence.

 ◦ Develop shared resources / measures

What was the outcome of the assessment of evaluation strategies

- Most partnerships met the OfS brief in the design of the strategies

- There is much variation in the size and structure of partnerships and strategies were generally proportionate

- There is a lot of great practice and some well designed evaluation activity taking place across the sector

- There are plenty of opportunities for partnerships to learn from and support each other

- Many partnerships do have at least some areas for 'further development'

- Collectively NCOP partnerships cover a range of approaches and methodologies

What will be the key areas of focus for building capability?

Developing thinking about the needs of different stakeholders
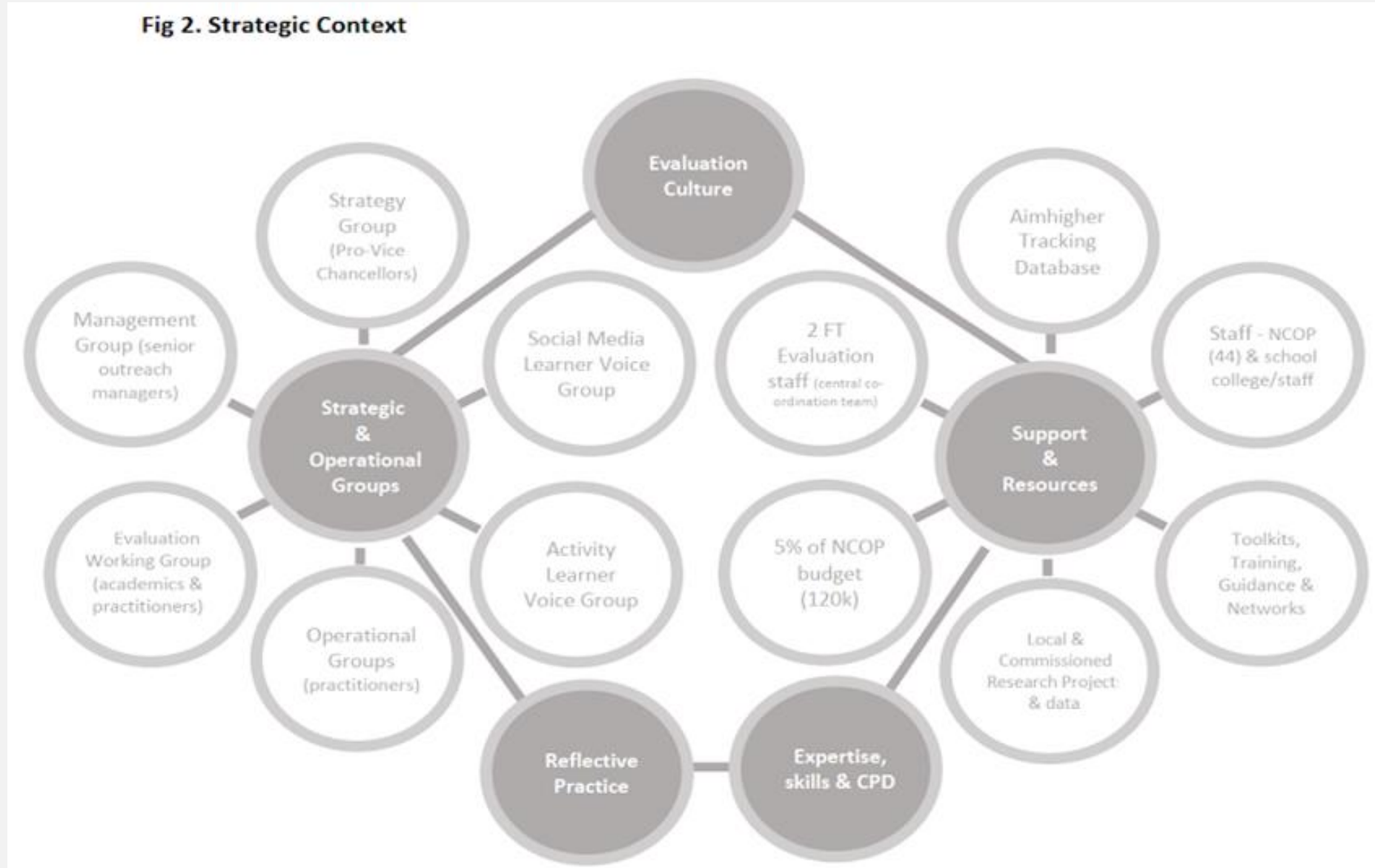
(Aimhigher Westmidlands)

Fig 2. Strategic Context

What will be the key areas of focus for building capability?

Improving the articulation between programme design, and the indicators used to measure progress

(Kent and Medway Progression Federation)

Figure 3: KaMCOP Phase 2 Strategic level Logic Model
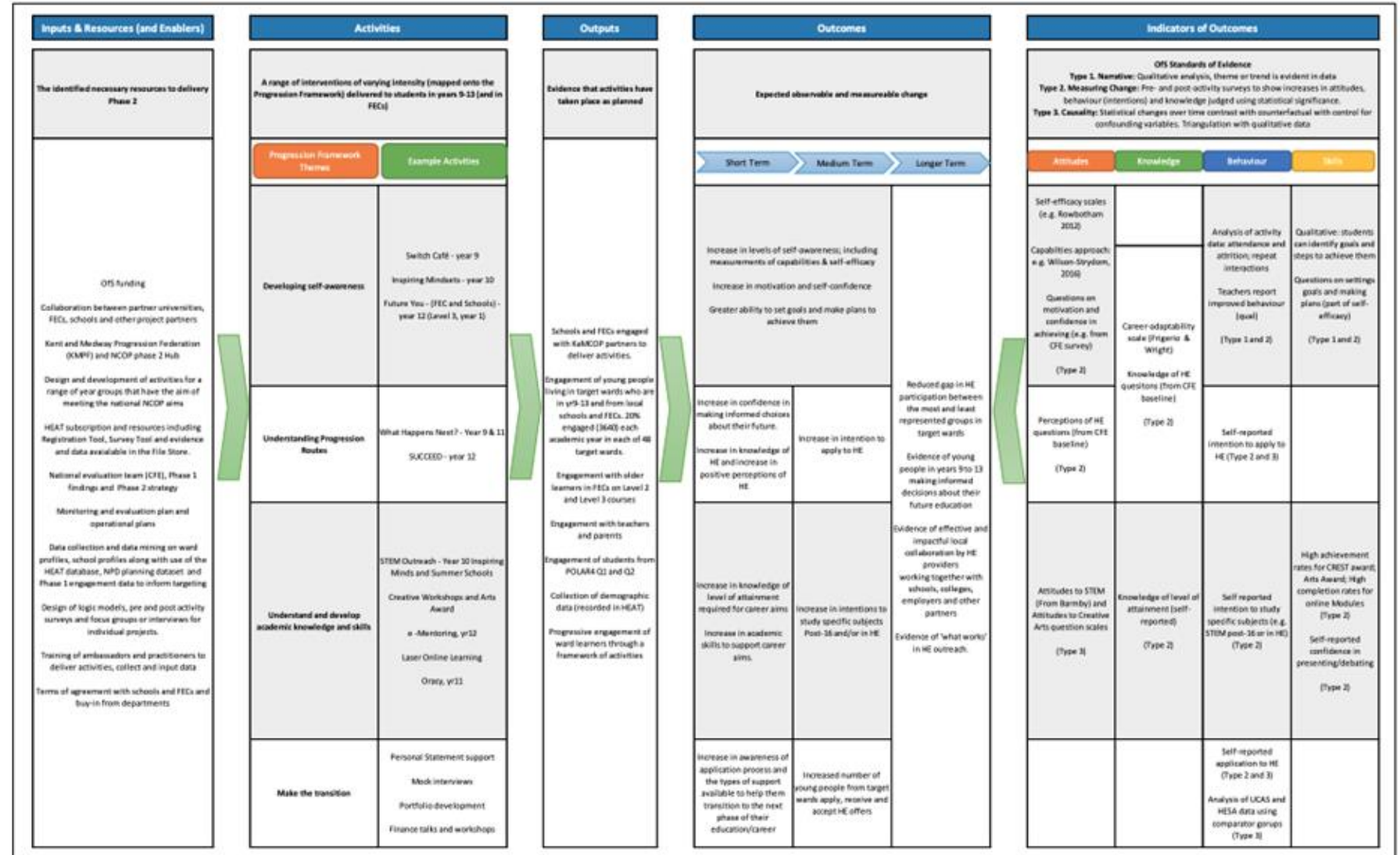
What will be the key areas of focus for building capability?

Developing effective feedback mechanisms within the consortium – in particular between practitioners and evaluators

(HEPP SY)

Iterative Feedback Model

"Owing to the theoretical approach taken [Realist Evaluation], the evaluation is very much an iterative process, one where there is an ongoing cycle of data collection, analysis, and feedback to the delivery team.

The approach allows the team to refine the delivery plan continually, making the Programme more bespoke where required and concentrating resources and types of delivery where they are most needed rather than where they may not be.

Figure 1: The iterative delivery-evaluation loop

This approach also enables evaluation to take place flexibly and continuously at different times in the lifespan of the programme. As evaluative findings are fed back into the Programme, the Evaluation Plan and logic model can be updated, and findings fed back to the wider team. For instance, the baseline survey findings uncovered the significant role which families play in shaping the decision-making of young people. This led to discussions about what activities HeppSY could carry out with parents and led to the inclusion of more specific targets in the logic model to achieve this. The qualitative case study work is an element of the evaluation that has the ability to quickly feed back into delivery planning, subsequently enabling more effective outcomes to be achieved.

Many more examples of good practice available

National Collaborative Outreach Programme: Evaluation Plans Feedback and Good Practice Advice: Interim Report

Disclaimer: This is not an exhaustive document. It is an interim draft of good practice guidance to support NCOP Consortia with improving and resubmitting their Evaluation Strategy documents.

The views expressed in this document and the recommendations made are those of the Assessment Team and do not represent official guidance from the Office for Students.

We welcome your feedback and comments on this interim draft and any suggestions for improvements; please email WPREU@sheffield.ac.uk

Other areas of focus for further development #1

- Responding to the limitations of self report data

- Developing thinking about the needs of different stakeholders

- Improving the articulation between programme design, and the indicators used to measure progress

- Developing effective feedback mechanisms within the consortium – in particular between practitioners and evaluators

Other areas of focus for further development #2

- Designing effective qualitative tools and analysing qualitative data

- Developing type 3 evaluation design

- Developing effective analytical approaches to evaluation data

- Incorporating 'learner voice' in the evaluation process

- Developing effective reports for key audiences

So what happens next?

- We've divided NCOP partnerships into regions – each with a named contact from the project team

- Evaluation capability building through face to face meetings, online resources, webinars

- Developing an online community of practice

  ◦ To share good practice / solutions

  ◦ Offer support

  ◦ Support collaborations

  ◦ Build a sustainable evaluation resource

Proposed time line (in 4 month chunks)

	Ongoing Support	Community of Practice	Developing Practical Evaluation Resources	Developing Shared Measurement Tools
Ongoing	Ad hoc support as required	Manage message board		Develop psychological construct tool
September	Introduction to project team	This webinar		
October		Theory of change workshop Launch website, blogs and messaging facility		
November		Webinar - Framing the evaluation process. Webinar - statistical analysis		
December	Regional networking meeting (online or face to face) Workshop and activities at 'Why Evaluate 2' Conference	Blog post - Sample NCOP of feedback process	Launch practical resources: Framing evaluation, logic models, theories of change, evaluation techniques and their uses, qualitative research process, trial-based designs, project management training	Resource: how to cognitively test questionnaires and surveys with learners