



CONSORTIUM
for stronger lgbt+ communities

**EMBEDDING THE LGBT+
OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK**

Opening Doors Case Study

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This Case Study has been produced by Traverse, who worked with Opening Doors during 2020 as part of a Connect Fund project.

Consortium extends huge thanks for their hard work and efforts as part of this project.

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The Connect Fund has been set up to strengthen the social investment market in England to better meet the needs of charities and social enterprises. Known as the 'Social Investment Infrastructure Fund', it is a £6 million fund for grants and investments that Barrow Cadbury Trust manages in partnership with Access—the Foundation for Social Investment.

www.connectfund.org.uk



Barrow Cadbury Trust charity number 1115476

Opening Doors: Using the Framework to develop an organisational outcomes framework

Organisation background

Opening Doors (OD) is the largest charity providing information and support services specifically for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ+) people over 50 in the UK.

They are a membership organisation that provides a befriending service and regular social & support opportunities across London to help develop networks and communities for LGBTQ+ people, aged over 50.

They also offer specialist training and consultancy for statutory and voluntary organisations, such as care homes, housing associations and hospitals, to help them understand the needs of older LGBTQ+ people.

Key drivers of change

OD is a relatively new organisation that has expanded rapidly and organically since its launch in 2016. The organisation recently entered a new phase of development and needed an organisation-wide framework that clearly outlined their priorities and the difference they seek to make through their work.

OD also wanted to develop a more structured approach to the research and evaluation of their work. They wanted to ensure that they were:

- Measuring the most important outcomes of their work, thereby reducing the collection of unnecessary data and research burden on their service users (following low response rates to internal surveys)
- Effectively combining standardised quantitative measures and qualitative research activities to help them better understand where their work was and was not working
- Undertaking research activities that built on evidence gaps which currently exist in the LGBT+ sector in the UK

Use of the Common Outcomes Framework

OD started to develop a theory of change for their organisation before they were aware of Consortium's Outcomes Framework, but struggled to clearly define a set of outcome areas that all their activities could be easily grouped under.

After they reviewed the Common Outcomes Framework, OD found that its main outcome areas broadly aligned with their own areas of work. They adopted the same overarching structure for their own organisational outcomes framework. They found that they could easily tweak the Framework's structure, as the outcome areas were broad enough to accommodate the specific outcomes that OD seeks to achieve through its work.

OD also used the list of suggested measures in the Framework as a starting point when thinking about how to measure their outcomes. They found some useful measures in the Framework that they had not heard of before, which they have since incorporated into their evaluation plan.

Impact of the Common Outcomes Framework

The Framework has helped OD articulate a strategy that – though specific to their outcomes and activities – is aligned with the wider work of the LGBT+ sector.

OD's evaluation framework has also helped them to review what data they do and do not need to collect across their existing data collection tools. This has, for example, supported the development of shorter, more focused wellbeing and annual member surveys.

OD's evaluation framework has also helped them to identify where they are currently missing data that will help them to evaluate their services more effectively.

Key reflections

OD recommend that organisations:

- Do not underestimate the anxiety and preconceptions that some staff have around evaluation and its purpose. Organisations need to emphasise that evaluation supports learning, working effectively and supporting service users, rather than it being an assessment of staff and their performance.
- Plan a long lead-in and development process, so that you have time to build staff's familiarity with outcomes, and all staff members have the opportunity and time to get involved.
- Support staff to be involved through clearly articulating the ways in which an evaluation framework can bring. This, in turn, incentivises support, participation and ownership.
- Review the existing measurement tools contained within the framework before trying to create your own, to save time where certain measurements and data collection tools already exist.

Continuing on the journey

OD will continue to revise their current data collection tools – and create new ones where relevant—in line with the new evaluation framework. They will also treat their evaluation framework as a 'living document', regularly revisiting it and refining it over the next year.