



# Good practice guidance for pilot projects

Partnership Action on Tobacco and Health  
and  
ASH Scotland Tobacco & Inequalities  
initiative



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## Introduction

PATH (Partnership Action on Tobacco and Health) is a joint initiative between ASH Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Government to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in Scotland. ASH Scotland is an independent Scottish charity working in partnership to protect people from the harm caused by tobacco.

The information contained in this document is the result of pilot project work in tobacco research and cessation managed by PATH and ASH Scotland. It is based on learning from both the Tobacco & Inequalities (T&I) Small Grants Fund (2005 - 2007) and the PATH Support Fund (2004-2007). The guidance aims to highlight areas of good practice when setting up and delivering funded projects, and suggest ways in which similar work might progress.

The Support Fund and the Small Grants Fund provided opportunities for funders, researchers, NHS boards and local authorities to develop new and innovative ways of engaging with groups of smokers, in a bid to better understand their needs and to develop new services with which they could engage. The subsequent projects also paved the way for further research and development, and in some cases provided a template for other services to use, so it is hoped that their success can inspire others to run similar initiatives.

**The Tobacco & Inequalities Small Grants Fund** aimed to raise awareness, challenge pre-conceptions, increase capacity and stimulate positive change in policy and practice relating to tobacco use. Around £220,000 was distributed from NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Government to a variety of one-year initiatives to address tobacco use amongst older adults, mental health service users or members of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. This was to be achieved through work with clients, training and supporting healthcare professionals and by the development of resources and research. The smallest amount awarded was £1,000 and the largest was £15,000.

**The PATH Support Fund** distributed almost £900,000 from the Scottish Government between 2004-2007, to eleven research projects and local initiatives which aimed to reduce the proportion of people faced with inequalities who smoke. Projects ranged from research-only (funded for less than a year) to service delivery over four years; target groups included older adults, prisoners, mental health service users, people living in areas of social deprivation, pregnant women and BME communities. The smallest grant awarded was £9,000 and the largest was £156,000.

A two-stage application process was held for all T&I and Support Fund projects; the first round considered the merits of every proposal, and the second round examined in more detail those applications which seemed to best fit the respective programme's criteria. A wide range of initiatives were funded: research; awareness-raising; training development and delivery; resource development and service design and delivery.

## Aims of this guidance

Although the projects which PATH and ASH Scotland oversaw related to tobacco use and stop-smoking initiatives, we believe that the lessons learned and resulting guidance in this document are applicable in a wide range of settings. It is our intention that others in the voluntary and healthcare sectors will be able to use this guidance, whether at a wider programme or narrower project level.

The intended audience for this document includes (but is not limited to):

- funders
- researchers
- commissioners of projects and services
- organisations receiving funds for planning/developing/implementing work
- service managers
- project and service staff
- evaluators

We cover a number of areas that should be considered at each stage, and address some of the challenges which faced projects that we funded and may also be experienced by other organisations. Because there are several stages involved in setting up and running a project, we have grouped our guidance document into three separate sections:

1. Planning
2. Delivery
3. Exit strategies

Ultimately, we hope that this document can be used as a cross-check to help others set up and successfully run projects, which will in turn enhance the experience of funders, organisations, project staff and service users alike.

# 1. Planning

This section looks at issues to consider during the planning of a project – from deciding on what it is you want to do (and who you intend to engage with), to considering ethical issues and the range and remit of funders.

## 1.1 Specify what kind of project it will be

Projects can take many forms, so know exactly what type you want to fund or set up (bearing in mind that it may be a combination of any/all of the following):

- research
- awareness-raising
- training
- enhancement to an existing service
- a brand new service

Consider what work has already been done in this area, to prevent duplication and ensure that you will be adding to the evidence base.

## 1.2 Define and engage with your target group

It is important to know *who* it is you want to engage with (e.g. practitioners, researchers, service users) and what connections (if any) you already have with them. For projects aiming to deliver a service, many factors might prevent or reduce engagement with potential clients - language issues, difficulties with accessing services at suitable times/venues, chaotic lifestyles etc. - so make sure that you know what challenges there may be in your area about the work you are intending to do.

A survey or focus group (made up of representatives from your intended clients or service users) can be helpful in giving advice and assistance with shaping an effective initiative and identifying specific needs prior to, and during, the funding process. Giving participants a sense of 'ownership' through the contributions they make will improve the chances of an initiative's overall success, as will including them in an ongoing steering group once the project is up and running.

## 1.3 Define what 'success' you are hoping for at the outset

What are the ultimate aims and objectives of your fund or initiative? As well as producing robust data (such as number of clients or stop-smoking attempts), 'success' for a project - particularly those working with clients who do not usually engage with services - might include more subtle indicators such as:

- client behaviour change (e.g. not smoking in the home or in front of children)
- increased self-confidence and self-esteem
- increased access to services by clients who don't usually engage with them
- signposting clients to additional/other services
- institutional or organisational change
- increased awareness of a specific issue and/or changed perceptions
- creating effective partnership working
- stimulating wider interest in your work
- producing new policies
- producing new resources, e.g. information leaflets, data collection tools
- providing training for staff
- identifying gaps in service provision (locally or nationally).

It is important to know if these 'softer' indicators are to be included in any evaluation of the project, and how they are to be collected. This must be made clear at the

outset, so that all parties (funders, project staff and evaluators) know what will be expected at the reporting stage.

#### **1.4 Be realistic about what you can achieve with your resources**

In the experience of PATH and ASH Scotland, it can take up to 18 months from funding being received until a new initiative is fully established. If your project is building on an existing service this timeframe might be shorter, but starting from scratch can be challenging. Often there are unforeseen circumstances which arise (e.g. delays in securing office space; getting Disclosure Scotland paperwork in order), and you need to have sufficient flexibility - and a realistic timeframe - to make allowances for such situations.

It is therefore important that key milestones for the set-up phase (and the project as a whole) are both achievable and realistic. A project's resources, be they financial or physical, should not be over-stretched in the pursuit of objectives. Using the SMART approach to project management – checking that the work you intend to do is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound – can help clarify some of these points at the funding application stage.

#### **1.5 Know what parameters you will be working within**

Throughout all stages of a project, it is vital to keep sight of start and completion dates – and to ensure that all parties are aware of them. Similarly, it is important for managers to keep track of spending and budget constraints, to ensure that there is no shortfall or overspend towards the end of a project's life.

Additionally, the original aims of the fund must not be lost, and all those involved – funders, steering group, managers, project staff and evaluators – should ensure that they bear these in mind through all stages of subsequent work.

#### **1.6 Know what resources you will need**

Most projects will require a range of resources, all of which should be accounted for when submitting a funding application. These may include:

- office and meeting space
- administration
- IT systems (computers, printers) and relevant software (e.g. Word, Excel)
- phone system / mobile phones
- staff training
- service-delivery premises
- travel budget (if going to visit or deliver a project/service)
- project-specific resources, e.g. translation services, crèche, Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

#### **1.7 Risk assessment and contingency planning**

It is essential to assess the potential 'risks' to a project of changing circumstances, and to do some contingency planning in case of delays, interruptions or changes to intended milestones and outputs. Ideally a contingency plan should be part of the documentation supporting a funding application, but if this is not feasible (or required), it should be done as close to the start of a project as is practical.

Risks can be both internal and external to a project – for example, difficulties in engaging with clients; changes to an organisation’s structure; resistance to change (from staff and/or clients); lack of prioritisation from management etc. Effective – and early – identification of such risks, and planning on how to deal with them, can ensure that a project runs as smoothly as possible.

### **1.8 Know who your partners will be, and ensure you have ‘buy-in’**

Partnership working can greatly enhance a project or service, bringing in expertise that you might not have in-house. Identify at the outset who you will need - or want - to work with (for example, specialist consultants; healthcare professionals; local authority departments; youth groups; community organisations etc.). There needs to be a motivation for partners to engage with your work, so make sure that they can see the benefits of supporting the initiative and ‘sell’ it to them – having common goals and shared outcomes will help to achieve this.

Having good support from all stakeholders – including staff and management – is crucial to the success of a service or project. For some short-life projects which PATH and ASH Scotland funded, this proved difficult to attain (since embedded services were often prioritised), but for those who did achieve it, the benefits were considerable. It can be particularly helpful if such stakeholders are involved in a steering group for the project, to add their knowledge and expertise in a given field and to ensure that start-up issues are considered.

Stakeholders might include managers, staff who are being asked to change/add to existing practice, other agencies which refer on to your project and services which are linked to your own. They may not have a direct role in the management of your project, but can help contribute to you achieving your objectives. It is also crucial to ensure that a new project successfully engages with – and *listens* to – the community or group for whom it is hoping to provide a service.

### **1.9 Ethical considerations**

Some health boards and other organisations, such as universities, may need a prospective project to first be cleared by their ethics committee (e.g. for dealing with issues around consent and confidentiality). If ethical approval is required you need to ascertain how long it should take. Obtaining ethical approval for a project can be a time- and resource-intensive process, and may have a knock-on effect on the timely achievement of your objectives. It is therefore important to include this – if required - in the milestones of your funding proposal.

### **1.10 Involvement of funders**

What role are the funders going to take in relation to work that they are supporting? Apart from managing and distributing grants, outlining terms and conditions of funding and receiving regular reports, are they also going to expect a place on a management or steering committee that oversees the project? It is important to both funders and project staff that this is clear at the outset, and discussed at the earliest opportunity during the application process.

## **2. Delivery**

This section looks at issues to be considered once a project is up and running.

### **2.1 Training requirements**

Some staff may need training before they can start working on a project (e.g. in data collection, IT skills, delivering health advice). Time and resources will need to be factored in for this at the outset – and it may also be an ongoing concern for new staff joining the project. Others may need to be released from their day-to-day duties if they're to attend awareness-raising events that are held as part of your initiative, so be aware of those implications too – for example, getting cover for midwives or dentists can be challenging, and needs to be arranged with plenty of notice.

### **2.2 Make sure you have dedicated management time for the project**

As well as carrying out the work you intend to, time will need to be allocated for the management of the initiative. This can prove to be challenging when working on a short-life project, but is of fundamental importance since there needs to be somebody in overall charge of day-to-day affairs. Responsibilities such as staffing, financial reporting and administration need to be clearly identified and allocated from the start.

### **2.3 Know what the reporting obligations are**

Most funders will expect to receive, as a minimum, regular reports on the progress of initiatives. These can take the form of monthly, quarterly or annual written reports, in addition to monthly or quarterly financial reports. Many funders (and/or evaluators) will also expect a Final Report, detailing the project's progress as a whole, and so time should be allocated for this toward the end of the funding period. It is vital to have a paper trail of related documentation so that new staff can quickly and easily take up the reins if necessary.

For funders and projects alike, a process map may be helpful in outlining 'what happens when' (e.g. how often reports are due in), designating who is responsible for writing or compiling reports, and ensuring that timelines are adhered to.

### **2.4 Data collection**

In addition to providing written reports, most projects will also need to collect data throughout their lifespan, to provide funders or parent bodies with evidence that their work is meeting milestones and achieving its objectives. You may need to develop your own methods of collecting and capturing information, if such tools are not already used by parent or national organisations (e.g. client diaries, surveys, steering group minutes, databases). This can be quite time-consuming, so ensure that it is built into overall resource estimates for staff and IT at the planning stage.

### **2.5 Evaluation issues**

It is also common practice for an initiative to be evaluated (by the funding body, by the project itself or by an external team) in order to see if it has been 'effective' at the end of its given time span. Often this will include data already recorded, but it might also require additional quantitative and qualitative information (e.g. client and/or staff interviews) which can result in significant extra work for those involved. Funders should outline what data they wish to collect, or provide key datasets, at the outset of any given project. Evaluators need to establish contact with the relevant organisational representatives from an early stage, to ensure a clear understanding of what will be required from all parties. It is also important to determine whether or

not recommendations and/or lessons learned will form part of the final evaluation, as these can prove useful for further dissemination and future action.

### **2.6 Have regular contact between funder and project**

It is worthwhile to build in regular contact (e.g. a monthly 'catch-up') between funder and project representative by whichever method is preferred (phone, email, video link or face-to-face). This can help strengthen relations, highlight any issues or difficulties at an early stage, and provide the opportunity for their quick resolution.

### **2.7 Have regular steering group / management committee meetings**

Having a strong steering group or management committee helps guide a project more efficiently, and can be instrumental in ensuring that key aims, objectives and milestones are achieved; this can also encourage 'buy-in' from strategic partners. A steering group's expertise can help flag up issues and concerns at an early stage and help to solve them, as well as provide support, direction and encouragement to project staff. Minutes from such meetings can also form part of the data collection or evaluation of a project.

Steering group members need not be drawn solely from professional groups. If delivering a service, including service users and/or community representatives can increase its likelihood of success. As previously mentioned, representatives of the funding body may expect to sit on such a group, so establish if that is the case at the outset of the project. It is important that meetings and communication are structured so that all members of the group gain from their involvement, as well as contributing to the project.

### **2.8 Publicise your project**

In order to get people to engage with the intended work, funding bodies and projects alike need to publicise what they're doing – to potential recipients of funds so that a wide range of applications are submitted; to partner organisations or other departments who may be in a position to make referrals to a project; to an initiative's intended client group etc. It should not be assumed that others will know about the project, even where there are good professional or community links already in place.

Working with the target group to design appropriate advertising will increase the likelihood of successful engagement, and so it may be useful to consider using the principles of social marketing when designing publicity (i.e. marketing which 'talks' to the intended target group in their language culturally as well as linguistically). Publicity might be done via word of mouth, in-house communications, local media, regular newsletters and awareness-raising events.

### **2.9 Be flexible**

Some PATH and T&I projects had to adjust their approach mid-stream to better address client needs (e.g. how, when, where a service was delivered) and to more closely match the skills and expertise of staff (e.g. recognising insufficient capacity to undertake additional research). It is important that projects and funders are flexible enough to respond to such demands (where logistics and finances permit), to ensure that final outcomes of the funded work can be achieved. Carrying out a risk assessment in advance and having a steering group in place will provide solutions and enable a project to quickly make any necessary changes.

### 3. Exit strategies

This section looks at what needs to be considered when an initiative comes to the end of its funding period.

#### 3.1 Sustainability

'Sustainability' can mean several things – mainstreaming all or part of a project into general service delivery; seeking further funding to develop work that has been started; disseminating lessons learned; retaining capacity and knowledge. If a project intends to carry on its work after funding has ended, plans must be put in place well in advance to enable a smooth transition in its management (e.g. from external funders to a local voluntary organisation). Having representatives from such bodies on the steering group from the start of a project may help pave the way for this, and prevent the duplication of start-up work for the new parent organisation.

Additionally, even if a specific project does not continue, the broader area of its work can still benefit - for example, from the production of clear referral pathways and protocols. It may also be possible to deploy staff in other areas to continue providing advice related to the initiative. It is important not to lose knowledge and skills gained once a project finishes, so that components of the work can continue.

#### 3.2 Returning funds

Some projects or initiatives might not use all funds allocated at the beginning of their work. Where this is the case, funding bodies may be amenable to the retention of some or all of the underspend if certain provisos are made, e.g. that the money will be used for continued awareness-raising, or channelled into a new project. It is important that any such agreement is put in writing (whether in advance or decided at a later stage), for the avoidance of doubt when a project subsequently ends.

#### 3.3 Dissemination of your findings/outcomes

There is no such thing as a 'good' or a 'bad' outcome for an initiative; there are *only* outcomes and learning. Even if milestones and objectives were not met, important lessons are often learnt on the journey – and it is worth sharing those with others who may be doing work similar to yours, so that they can build on what you've done.

The ultimate dissemination of successes – and struggles – will often be a pre-requisite of funded work, and so it is important to have a strategy (and a budget for dissemination) in place to enable this at the end of the project. Consideration should be given to several issues:

- who do you want/need to disseminate your findings to? (colleagues? similar organisations? professional bodies?)
- how will your evaluation or results be disseminated? (printed and posted? distributed electronically? published on a website? launched at an event?)
- do you want to present it to peer-reviewed bodies, e.g. professional journals?

#### 3.4 Winding up a project

If a funding stream, project or initiative has come to the end of its designated workplan, some time will need to be taken to ensure that all obligations have been met (e.g. equipment returned, staff redeployed). It is also good practice for funders to acknowledge the end of a specific initiative, by writing to the organisation(s) concerned and confirming that all requirements have been fulfilled, e.g. reports received, funding returned or re-allocated.

## How PATH and ASH Scotland can help you

If you are setting up a new initiative that relates to tobacco and/or smoking, staff from PATH and ASH Scotland would be happy to discuss what support or advice we can give you – for example, by meeting with you to discuss a funding application, or by being a member of a steering group.

Our particular areas of expertise relate to young people and those faced with inequalities – people from areas of economic disadvantage, black and minority ethnic communities, mental health service users, older adults and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people. Please do get in touch if you think we may be of assistance in those fields.

telephone: **0131 225 4725** email: [ashscotland@ashscotland.org.uk](mailto:ashscotland@ashscotland.org.uk)

## Additional resources

- **ASH Scotland's website:** [www.ashscotland.org.uk](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk)
- **PATH's web pages:** [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3355.html](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3355.html)
- more information about all phases of **ASH Scotland T&I work** can be found at: [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/5367.html](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/5367.html)
- details of the individual projects involved in the **PATH Support Fund** can be found at: [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3513.html](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3513.html)
- the **external evaluation of Tobacco and Inequalities Small Grants Fund** is available at: [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/4161.html](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/4161.html)
- the **external evaluation of the PATH Support Fund** is available at: [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/4221.html](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/4221.html)
- a document outlining **lessons learned from NHS Health Scotland/ASH Scotland youth projects** is available at: [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/files/DDSCSforyoungpeople.pdf](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/files/DDSCSforyoungpeople.pdf)
- a **free resource pack** to help community-based initiatives at the **evaluation** stage is available to download at: [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3367.html#Evaluation\\_Journey](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/3367.html#Evaluation_Journey)
- an example of **ethical considerations** can be found at: [www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/aboutus/ourorganisation/committees/elrec.asp](http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/aboutus/ourorganisation/committees/elrec.asp)
- an example of a **health-related flowchart** can be found at: [www.healthscotland.com/documents/1591.aspx](http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/1591.aspx)
- information about **social marketing** can be found at: [www.ism.stir.ac.uk/index.htm](http://www.ism.stir.ac.uk/index.htm)
- for help with **building partnerships and local alliances** to promote tobacco-related work, visit [www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/5144.1143.html](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/ash/5144.1143.html)



PATH is a joint initiative between ASH Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Government to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in Scotland



Action on Smoking & Health (Scotland) (ASH Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity (SC 010412) and a company limited by guarantee (Scottish company no 141711).

