Evaluation of the ESF Local Service Board Development and Priority Delivery Project:
Final Summative Report
Evaluation of the ESF Local Service Board Development and Priority Delivery Project: Final Summative Report

Dr James Downe, Dr Hadar Elraz, Cardiff Business School

Lorna Adams, Erica Garnett, Katie Spreadbury, IFF Research

Carol Hayden, John Houghton, Shared Intelligence

Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

For further information please contact:
Jamie Smith
Knowledge and Analytical Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
Tel: 029 2082 6850
Email: jamie.smith@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the large number of people who have contributed to this report, including local authority officers and senior staff from other public service providers across Wales. We particularly wish to thank officers in each of the ESF-LSB delivery projects who provided data and reports and those who completed the all-Wales Public Service surveys. Finally, we are grateful for the support and advice provided by Jamie Smith, Ceri Thomas, Louise Bayliss-Chapman and their colleagues who have managed the evaluation on behalf of the Welsh Government.
# Table of contents

List of tables .................................................................................................................. iii  
List of figures .................................................................................................................. iv  

Executive Summary ...................................................................................................... 1  
1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 16  
2. The Project's Progress and Outputs ........................................................................ 28  
3. Meta-analysis and good practice examples .............................................................. 41  
4. All-Wales Public Services Survey ........................................................................... 72  
5. Conclusions and recommendations ........................................................................ 106  
References ..................................................................................................................... 119  
Annex 1. List of ESF-LSB projects .............................................................................. 121
List of tables

Table 2.1: ESF-LSB Project Indicators.................................................................33
Table 3.1: Delivery projects used for the meta-analysis .......................................42
List of figures

Figure 1.1: ESF-LSB Project Evaluation Framework ..................................................18
Figure 1.2: Main research questions for the formative evaluation ...............................24
Figure 1.3: Main research questions for meta-analysis in the summative phase .......... 26
Figure 4.1: Profile of response by partnership type ....................................................74
Figure 4.2: History of and support received by the project or partnership ............... 75
Figure 4.3: The main focus of projects/partnerships ....................................................76
Figure 4.4: The main focus of projects/partnerships ....................................................76
Figure 4.5: The main focus of projects/partnerships ....................................................77
Figure 4.6: Role of the project manager ....................................................................79
Figure 4.7: Role of the project manager ....................................................................80
Figure 4.8: Nature of partnership working .................................................................81
Figure 4.9: Nature of partnership working .................................................................81
Figure 4.10: Nature of partnership working ...............................................................82
Figure 4.11: Level and type of integration .................................................................83
Figure 4.12: Level and type of integration .................................................................84
Figure 4.13: Level and type of integration .................................................................84
Figure 4.14: Support from LSB and ESF-LSB national team .....................................86
Figure 4.15: Key members of the project .................................................................87
Figure 4.16: Extent to which ESF funding has enabled partners to add value .......... 88
Figure 4.17: Extent to which ESF funding has enabled partners to add value ......89

Figure 4.18: Meeting project or partnership goals ........................................90

Figure 4.19: Meeting project or partnership goals ........................................90

Figure 4.20: Meeting project or partnership goals ........................................91

Figure 4.21: Project/partnership record for sharing resources, funding and finding solutions to benefit the local area .........................................................92

Figure 4.22: Reported delivery success against project priorities .................93

Figure 4.23: Support for learning and change in delivery projects ...............94

Figure 4.24: Factors contributing to learning and change in delivery projects ....95

Figure 4.25: Barriers to learning and change in delivery projects ................96

Figure 4.26: Lessons learnt about achieving outcomes through collaboration .....97

Figure 4.27: Extent to which learning could be useful to partnerships/projects and Welsh Government .................................................................98

Figure 4.28: Preferred methods of sharing learning in the future ..................99

Figure 4.29: Aspects of projects suitable for a wider roll-out .......................100

Figure 4.30: Role of the Welsh Government .................................................101

Figure 4.31: Role of the Welsh Government .................................................102

Figure 4.32: Role of the Welsh Government .................................................102
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym/Key word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additionality</td>
<td>Is the extent to which something happens as a result of an intervention that would not have occurred in the absence of that intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery project</td>
<td>A proportion of the ESF-LSB Project budget funded a range of Local Service Board-led public service improvement projects (as well as some WLGA-led projects and one WCVA-led project), which varied widely in subject matter and scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF-LSB Project (or ESF-LSB)</td>
<td>The European Social Fund Local Service Board Development and Priority Delivery Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSB</td>
<td>Local Service Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-analysis</td>
<td>A method for combining the findings from one or more studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPT</td>
<td>Neath-Port Talbot (local authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Rhondda Cynon Taf (local authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCVA</td>
<td>Welsh Council for Voluntary Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEFO</td>
<td>Welsh European Funding Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA</td>
<td>Welsh Local Government Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This final summative report is the third main output from a three year evaluation (2012-2015) of the ESF Local Service Board Development and Priority Delivery Project (hereafter ESF-LSB Project) commissioned by the Welsh Government. The ESF-LSB Project was funded under Priority Four, Theme 1 of the Convergence ESF Operational Programme for West Wales and the Valleys, which aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services through more effective collaborative working and by building the capacity of public services to deliver higher quality services. The evaluation was established to assess:

   - whether the ESF-LSB Project has led to better public services and outcomes for citizens;
   - how the processes by which the Project has been implemented and managed have contributed to these outcomes;
   - whether and how the Project has communicated and disseminated learning from the delivery projects, nationally and locally; and
   - how the Project has improved the integration of the third sector with LSBs, whether this has led to better services and outcomes, and if this progress is sustainable.

2. The evaluation used a theory-based framework as shown below. This enabled us to identify and bring together the evidence from different kinds of delivery projects in a way which enabled an overall assessment of the outcomes from the ESF-LSB Project and how the processes have contributed to these. The framework also informed the design of all research instruments so that questions could be posed on the importance of contextual factors, different activities, the extent to which collaborative capacity and capability is important, how learning is disseminated, whether organisational and service change is

---

1 The Welsh Government published an interim formative evaluation report in June 2014 and a final formative report followed in January 2015, which was accompanied by a case study annex containing in-depth case studies of seven delivery projects.
produced and how this results in outcomes for service users – and potentially the wider community.

**ESF-LSB Project Evaluation Framework**

3. The evaluation included a formative and summative phase. The methodology for the formative phase of the evaluation comprised:

- literature review and development of the theory-based framework;
- scoping interviews with all delivery projects;
- two rounds of interviews with national stakeholders;
- baseline for a two-wave all-Wales Public Service Survey on collaboration;
- in-depth case studies of seven delivery projects; and
- analysis of discussions at three learning events.

4. The findings from this phase were presented in the Final Formative Report (Welsh Government 2015) and are summarised in Chapter 2 of this summative report.

5. The summative phase of the evaluation aimed to provide an overall assessment of whether and how the outcomes of the ESF-LSB Project have been achieved. The methodology for this phase was designed to enable us to build on the findings in the Final Formative Report and comprised:
• secondary analysis of Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) indicators showing output data from all delivery projects;
• review of evidence about how the Project has contributed to cross-cutting policy themes (equality, scrutiny and environmental sustainability);
• meta-analysis of evaluative material from a sample of 17 delivery projects. This drew on local evaluation reports and closure reports produced by the delivery projects to add insight to the findings from the thematic analysis of the case studies as presented in the formative report;
• production of a set of ‘good practice vignettes’ drawn from the meta-analysis. These cover the themes of ‘third sector involvement’, ‘the role of the project manager’ and ‘legacy’ as well as two projects’ delivery of outcomes; and
• second wave of the all-Wales Public Service Survey on collaboration. This survey was sent to senior managers from across the whole Welsh public service, including the civil service, local government, health, police, fire and rescue, Communities First and the third sector. A total of 312 survey responses were received – a response rate of 25%.

The Project’s progress and outputs

6. The formative evaluation’s findings led us to conclude that there was some way to go before we could assess whether the ESF-LSB Project had led to better public services and better outcomes for citizens (although there were some exemplar delivery projects), and there were questions about whether it would be possible to demonstrate these outcomes.

7. We also found that most delivery projects needed to improve collaboration – through improved collaborative capacity and organisational change - before being able to deliver the type of public service improvements that would lead to improved outcomes for service users. This raised questions about whether these would be achievable within the lifetime of the funded delivery projects.

8. Our synthesis of seven case studies revealed some common patterns with regard to impacts, processes (including enabling factors and barriers to achieving impacts) and learning. We used these to identify seven core themes which were the main determinants of whether a project was making progress on collaboration and achieving service and/or process outcomes. These were:
the nature of the collaboration; where the project sits within an organisation; the role of the project manager; how knowledge is shared; leadership and the role of the LSB; setting ambitious and realistic outcomes; and the sustainability of the project.

9. The same factors were relevant to enabling learning within and between projects about ‘what works’ in achieving outcomes.

10. Involvement and integration of the third sector was noticeable mainly in the delivery projects that were either third sector-led and/or which relied heavily on the third sector for delivery. There was little evidence that the third sector was fully involved in collaborative service design as well as delivery.

11. While the delivery projects were, in some cases, testing out innovative approaches in delivering a specific service and sharing this through tacit and ad hoc learning within and between projects, this was not being disseminated systematically across Wales, either by the delivery projects themselves or the Welsh Government.

12. These findings were used to make a series of recommendations for the Welsh Government and its partners to consider in order to address these issues in a way that maximised and disseminated the learning from the Project. We also drew on them to inform the summative phase of the evaluation.

13. The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) used four indicators to assess the success of the Project – the number of dissemination initiatives; collaborative agreements between public service bodies; secondment placements made available; and organisational learning and development strategies produced.

14. Our analysis shows that, in aggregate, the projects have achieved their targets in all four indicators. In two cases (dissemination initiatives and organisational learning and development), the totals achieved are more than five times greater than the target. The idea of secondments was to enable cross-fertilisation of ideas across the public sector and build-up the experience of (future) project managers. The problem of recruiting project managers led to a (very) delayed start for most projects.

15. There are a number of issues with the WEFO indicators that affect their usefulness. First, because the indicators are activities and outputs, it is not clear if and how they relate or contribute to the intended outcomes. Second,
there are issues of defining and measuring the WEFO indicators. Third, the indicators are aggregated for ESF returns but meaning is lost without some exploration of performance in and between individual projects. Fourth, it is important to not only focus upon the numbers. One project may have delivered a large number of dissemination initiatives but the quantity of events may be less important and effective than a carefully designed single initiative in another project. Fifth, there are potentially some examples of 'good practice' provided as evidence of achieving targets in the closure reports but these have not been distilled or shared. Finally, while the diversity of projects produced a range of different outcomes, it was a lost opportunity for WEFO not to try and design some indicators that measured the more generic or high level outcomes using feedback from those affected by the projects.

16. The Welsh Government outlined a number of cross-cutting (or generic) themes which are common to all LSBs and where a consistent approach was needed to drive improvement. These themes were: citizen engagement; scrutiny; equalities; and sustainable development. There was a significant amount of rhetoric about the cross-cutting themes in both the proposal for EU funding and in proposals for funding from delivery projects, but they have not played out as being significant themes.

17. The Welsh Government asked about these cross-cutting issues in their visits to projects but there seemed to be an emphasis on ensuring that key policies were in place for audit purposes e.g. equality impact assessments. As these were outputs, they could be measured. For most LSBs, however, this was simply 'business as usual' and as they were already doing these things, there was little or no 'added value'.

**Meta-analysis and good practice examples**

18. We used the meta-analysis of local evaluations and other reports from 17 delivery projects to identify the key themes or factors that affect the success of delivery projects in achieving their aims and desired outcomes. We found these were:

- the role, skills and capacity of the project manager;
- whether there are pre-existing collaborative partnerships;
the active engagement of all partner organisations;
the involvement of staff at all levels and from different roles;
engagement of service users through co-production and feedback;
clear project aims linked to a rationale for collaboration;
having ambitious, realistic and measurable outcomes; and
a funded, legacy plan to sustain progress and outcomes.

19. These success factors, when in place, have helped projects overcome a number of external challenges that project evaluations and closure reports highlighted as barriers to progress.

20. The meta-analysis identified some common themes which may have reduced projects' progress or limited their opportunities in achieving some of the key objectives of the ESF-LSB Development and Priority Delivery Project. The first of these was a lack of strategic leadership in many projects, including from the LSB. This is ironic, given the focus of the Project on capacity building for collaboration. It is also likely to affect the ability of LSBs to learn from, embed and replicate good practice from approaches taken by the projects.

21. Secondly, we found that the third sector had not been involved in projects to the extent that was originally envisaged either by the Welsh Government and WCVA or by the projects themselves.

22. The meta-analysis showed that although projects had engaged in learning, this was mainly through informal and tacit sharing of knowledge and understanding of the project within the project team. There was little evidence of attempts to share learning with other areas or with national stakeholders, unless this had been facilitated by Welsh Government. When projects or LSBs had initiated structured opportunities to share learning about their projects within their local areas or regions, this seemed to have helped with legacy planning to sustain the project and/or embed its approach as 'business as usual'.
All-Wales Public Services Survey

23. The survey results have enabled us to explore how the ESF-LSB delivery projects have changed over a two-year period and how they compare with 'other partnerships'.

24. Overall, project managers were rated as performing their role effectively, particularly on keeping partners committed to the project and encouraging the project to consider new ideas.

25. Participants felt that they had learnt a number of lessons about achieving outcomes through collaboration. The lessons most commonly learnt were 'the importance of shared goals/a clear project plan' and 'the importance of regular communication/sharing good practice'.

26. In terms of behaviours, there was more trust reported between members in ESF-LSB delivery projects than in other partnerships. There is evidence of a more collaborative model of operation within the ESF-LSB delivery projects than the other partnerships as they show significantly higher levels of agreement that the project had a good record of 'Finding solutions to problems facing the area', 'sharing resources' or 'pooling funding'.

27. The level of integration amongst ESF-LSB delivery projects appeared higher than that amongst other partnerships. The highest level of agreement was with sharing information (62% of ESF-LSB delivery projects and 43% of other partnerships) but this is only a first step to integration and ratings were lower than 50% for the other aspects of integration such as developing new processes to combine services or operations or introducing shared accountability mechanisms.

28. Local authorities and other public sector organisations were viewed as key project members; they were also generally thought to have had the time to engage fully with the project. Third sector organisations, community representatives and private sector organisations were seen as less likely to have the capacity to engage fully or to be considered key project members. This is despite the fact that one of the key aims of the ESF funding was to increase collaboration with the third sector.

29. The main barriers to learning and change in the projects were the differing organisational cultures (61%), followed by lack of time (48%) and not knowing
where to find the information (26%). The factors that contributed most to learning and change were sharing examples of good practice (74%), managerial leadership (63%), evidence-based data (61%) and evaluation (61%).

30. Only a third of ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed that the ESF-LSB national team was good at disseminating good practice (34%). The fact that the projects have now finished suggests a missed opportunity by the Welsh Government (and the projects themselves) to disseminate the learning.

31. In regards to collaborative processes and outcomes, ESF-LSB delivery projects scored more positively than other partnerships for success in 'sharing knowledge' (66% compared with 46%), 'bringing together the skills and resources of different organisations' (61% compared with 40%), 'engaging a wide variety of stakeholders' (51% compared with 35%), 'finding new solutions to the problems facing the area' (45% compared with 33%) and 'delivering more joined up services' (44% compared with 31%). The delivery projects were also perceived as being more likely than other partnerships to be successful in delivering against some or all of the elements identified as being major priorities for their projects.

32. Generally, ESF-LSB delivery projects seemed to have lacked the support they desired. Just over half of participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed that their LSB had been supportive of the project. As the projects were focused on key priority areas of the LSB, we expected the level of agreement regarding the support received to have been higher.

33. In terms of sustainability, nearly seven in 10 (68%) ESF-LSB delivery project participants reported that at least some elements of the project had continued; 16% responded that the project had continued as it was and 52% reported that elements of the project have continued. Participants were most likely to agree that funding had enabled partners to achieve outcomes sooner than would have been possible without funding, to have achieved outcomes that would not have been possible at all without funding (additionality) and to improve trust and understanding between partners in delivering together (around half of respondents agreed strongly with each of these achievements). These figures
reflect the views of 82 ESF-LSB delivery project participants covering 32 different projects.

Conclusions and recommendations

34. We have structured our conclusions according to the four aims of the Project. These are followed by a summary of our recommendations showing the main areas in which we think the Welsh Government and local authorities and other partners could influence improvements. Detailed recommendations are shown in Chapter 5 of this report.

Better public services and outcomes for citizens

35. The evidence that has emerged since the closure of the delivery projects shows that while processes have been put in place and outputs delivered, overall it is still difficult to assess outcomes for service users.

36. Respondents from ESF-LSB delivery projects were more likely to agree that they had delivered against their goals than their counterparts from other partnerships. Many of these goals, however, were processes (sharing knowledge, engaging a wide variety of stakeholders etc.), rather than outcomes. Only a third of respondents in 2015 strongly agreed that their project had ‘delivered better services’.

37. The Welsh Government tried to get projects to develop local evaluation frameworks so they understood how activities lead to outputs and to outcomes, but the use of such methodologies was inconsistent.

38. A large number of projects had difficulty designing and setting outcome measures for service users and/or the wider population. Very few indicators of financial outcomes or efficiencies were set by projects and even in projects where it was feasible to get user feedback on the impact of changes, there was not enough thought or investment of time in collecting data.

39. It has been difficult therefore, for evaluators, at both the project and strategic level, to assess the relative 'success' of projects where realistic outcomes and associated measures have not been set.

40. We recognise that issues of timing and attribution can make it difficult to detect change in outcomes for citizens. However while the impact of some projects
may only be revealed in the future, for the majority of projects there has been sufficient time to assess impact but inadequate evidence is available to know whether or not it has delivered for service users.

41. Rather, the main barriers in play impeding outcomes for citizens appeared to be whether the delivery projects were sufficiently innovative and had the ability to drive systems change and whether the necessary senior political and managerial leadership was in place to give a sufficiently high profile and status to the delivery projects and hold them to account for delivering outcomes.

42. Overall our summative evaluation concludes that it is mainly process outcomes (rather than service/citizen outcomes) that have been delivered. With a few notable exceptions, there is little evidence from most projects that improved processes have led to improved outcomes for the public.

*Implementation and management processes*

43. The all-Wales Public Service surveys showed that respondents from ESF-LSB delivery projects were more positive than those from other partnerships on a range of collaborative processes such as ‘bringing together skills and resources of different organisations’, ‘finding new solutions to the problems facing the area’ and ‘delivering more joined-up services’. They also showed higher levels of financial collaboration such as sharing resources and pooling funding which bodes well for future public services if budgets continue to be reduced.

44. All the evidence on the role played by project managers is positive. They deployed both generic skills for relationship building (e.g. communication and negotiation skills) as well as project management skills. There is a concern, however, about whether project managers, on their own, had sufficient influence to get things done particularly if there was an absence of strategic leadership as discussed above.

45. Given the resource invested in the project managers, it seems that insufficient effort has been placed on developing these individuals to their full extent. Although the regional projects, which received WLGA funding in addition to that from ESF, were able to access WLGA training events specifically aimed at enhancing the skills of project managers around collaboration, we don’t know
about the extent to which these skills have been retained and used by local authorities and LSBs after the end of the ESF-funded delivery projects.

46. While the projects had to produce annual reports for the Welsh Government, it wasn’t always clear how the performance of the projects were being held to account. The role of scrutiny was not embedded within delivery projects’ accountability mechanisms and that provided by the LSB was patchy.

**Learning from the delivery projects**

47. The all-Wales Public Service survey showed that learning from delivery projects’ experiences of collaboration could be transferable to a range of institutional contexts and locations. These include the Welsh Government - in terms of setting direction and devising policy regarding collaborative working within the sector - and for other local partnerships in the same local authority area or region as well as more widely.

48. The main barriers to learning and change reported by the delivery projects were ‘different organisational cultures’ and a lack of time. Preferred methods of sharing learning in the future were regional learning events followed by an email newsletter or summary.

49. These responses raise questions about different understandings of ‘learning’ and ‘dissemination’. While the latter may be an activity designed to share learning about a project, there is no guarantee that participants do learn from other projects in a way that helps them use this knowledge in other contexts.

50. The evidence on learning poses the question of who is – or should be – taking responsibility and providing leadership for sharing learning. Our analysis suggests that strong leadership, providing the authority and credibility to engage and galvanise partners, is crucial to facilitate learning within and between local areas and transfer knowledge about collaboration to Welsh Government.

51. Without this explicit leadership, the evaluation suggests that much of the learning that takes place about collaboration for achieving outcomes will be *ad hoc* and tacit, which can happen easily and naturally, but it is fragile as it depends on individuals, is unlikely to be more widely available to other projects and professionals and may not be sustained.
52. The Welsh Government need to give greater emphasis on learning and sharing good practice within public services but there is also a responsibility on those receiving funding to share what they have learnt with others.

*Integration of the third sector and LSBs*

53. The evidence suggests that neither the ESF-LSB funding nor the Making the Connections funding has been particularly effective in improving LSBs’ relationships with the third sector through collaboration on specific projects. This raises questions about how influential third sector representatives on LSBs are, particularly as the survey findings showed that less than half of delivery projects agreed that the third sector was a key member of their partnership and/or had the capacity to engage in the partnership.

54. The meta-analysis illuminates this point and suggests that the Project has only led to better involvement and integration of the third sector in the few delivery projects that were either third sector-led and/or which relied heavily on the third sector for delivery.

55. Although it was intended that the local third sector should be fully involved in collaborative service design – as well as delivery - this has not been happening as much as it should have across the Project.

56. The conclusion that there has been little progress and possibly some worsening of the effective involvement of the third sector in LSBs and delivery projects over the ESF funding period, is borne out by the Making the Connections evaluation.

57. Possible reasons for this situation may include a mind-set within some statutory services that does not think of the third sector as having a strategic design and planning role and only considers involving the sector when it has an obvious part to play in service delivery. Some projects also raised concerns about the capacity of the third sector to engage in local partnerships.

58. Given that Making the Connections was run alongside the ESF-LSB Project to increase third sector capacity to this end, this suggests a need to learn more about the reasons for the lack of progress in third sector integration and involvement to improve public services and to consider more radical approaches to addressing this policy priority.
Recommendations for Welsh Government:

- **Improve application assessment processes** by:
  - introducing challenge and rigour at a very early stage;
  - giving greater emphasis to and incentives for project evaluation;
  - supporting projects in defining aims, setting indicators and outcomes;
  - outlining clear criteria for innovation and system change; and
  - putting mechanisms in place whereby projects are required to share outcomes with the Welsh Government and other projects.

- **Be realistic** that some projects are not set up to directly impact service users and others may fail.

- **Consider designing and developing a structured programme to build evaluative and analytical capacity** of all LSBs/PSBs to improve their focus on setting and demonstrating outcomes and utilising qualitative evidence.

- Insist that **governance and scrutiny procedures** for projects are robust, that expectations about **leadership** are clear and include producing and implementing a ‘**legacy plan**’ to sustain progress on outcomes and embed good practice through new ways of working after funding has ended.

- Agree a **learning and dissemination programme** to encourage and incentivise LSBs/PSBs to support and learn from delivery projects (and related projects and initiatives) in a prompt and timely manner and consider their suitability for wider roll-out for national, regional or local service delivery.

- Ensure that there is ‘ownership’ of each project and/or generic themes from senior **Welsh Government officials** to develop and widen the work to date to disseminate learning about outcomes and effective collaborative approaches on specific policy themes.

- Capture and disseminate the learning generated from using ESF funding to employ **collaborative project managers** in Welsh public services.

- **Work with WCVA** and others to:
  - reflect on the findings of the evaluations of the ESF-LSB project and Making the Connections to draw out the key learning points about the
design and implementation of these programmes in relation to the integration and involvement of the third sector with LSBs; and

- consider new ways to encourage LSBs and their partners to do more to integrate the third sector in the delivery, design and planning of services.

Recommendations for local authorities and partners:

- Give greater emphasis to designing projects that can be evaluated, ensuring that monitoring data are available and making adequate provision of resources to undertake evaluation, including by specifying measurable outcomes and collecting qualitative evidence on impacts on service users.

- Ensure that there are clear accountability mechanisms for project performance through the scrutiny process or in LSB reporting arrangements.

- Ensure that there are clear governance arrangements in place including a senior responsible officer who has formal ‘ownership’ of the project.

- Take a structured approach to disseminating the outcomes and learning of local delivery projects and agreeing how this should be used to inform legacy plans and future collaboration in other service areas.

- Use the existing online resource (hosted by the WLGA, the Wales Audit Office and others) to share learning and transfer knowledge about how collaboration can improve service delivery and citizen outcomes.

- Consider how best to involve the third sector as a matter of course in all collaborative working to attempt to improve service delivery and citizen outcomes in line with the Power to Local People White Paper.

- Review the capacity of the local third sector to engage in LSBs and other partnerships and work with CVCs and other partners to plan ways of increasing this capacity if required.

59. In addition to the specific recommendations above, we make some overarching recommendations to the Welsh Government and its partners about how to disseminate and use the findings from this summative evaluation. These are:
The Welsh Government should consider using this evaluation, the evaluation of Regional Collaborative Working currently underway, and other relevant evaluations such as Making the Connections, to draw out common lessons about effective collaboration that can lead to system change and population outcomes. There is significant potential to bring together learning from across different funding streams, so learning is not conducted in silos.

In line with its research and evaluation principles, the Welsh Government should agree how it wants to use the findings of this evaluation to help ensure there is a legacy from the Project. There are learning points for Welsh Government at all stages of the process from supporting projects in designing a robust evaluation framework and setting outcomes measures, to improving how learning and good practice from the Project is shared. The responsibility for embedding and acting on these lessons should be shared across Welsh public services.
1. **Introduction**

**Background to the evaluation**

1.1 This final summative report is the third main output from a three-year evaluation (2012-2015) of the ESF Local Service Board Development and Priority Delivery Project (hereafter ESF-LSB Project). An interim formative evaluation report was produced in June 2014 (Welsh Government 2014) and a final formative report followed in January 2015 (Welsh Government 2015). This was accompanied by a case study annex containing in-depth case studies of seven delivery projects.

1.2 The ESF-LSB Project was funded under Priority Four, Theme 1 of the Convergence ESF Operational Programme for West Wales and the Valleys which aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services through more effective collaborative working and by building the capacity of public services to deliver higher quality services.

1.3 The evaluation aimed to assess:

- whether and how the ESF-LSB Project has led to better public services and outcomes for citizens;
- how the processes by which the Project has been implemented and managed have contributed to these outcomes;
- whether and how the Project has communicated and disseminated learning from the delivery projects, nationally and locally; and
- how the Project has improved the integration of the third sector with LSBs, whether this has led to better services and outcomes, and if this progress is sustainable.

1.4 The size and scope of the ESF-LSB Project is significant. The Project's total funding amounted to £17 million\(^3\), of which 53% was allocated to the delivery projects. The other 47% was allocated to different streams, the most significant being: management of the Project, a series of evaluations of the different strands of the Project and funding of support officers (LSBs, Making the Connections and Communities First).

---

\(^2\) Originally the evaluation also aimed to assess the extent to which the outcomes from the ESF-LSB Project impacted on the population, but as discussed later in this chapter, this was not feasible in practice.

\(^3\) The actual final gross spend on the project was £13,850,276.
1.5 There were 38 so-called ‘delivery projects’ across Wales (the full list of projects is shown in Annex 1 of this report). They covered a wide range of policy areas such as: social and health care, employment, transport and engineering, environment, housing, community development and support services (ICT and legal). The funded delivery projects all finished by 31 December 2014 at the end of their ESF funding period⁴.

Research design and methodology

Evaluation framework

1.6 It was agreed to adopt a theory-based evaluation approach because this is well suited to understanding not just whether, but also how and why a project works. There were a number of outcomes that the ESF-LSB Project was intended to achieve and this type of approach enabled us to present a logical sequence, from the context in which the Project operated, to the inputs used to conduct the activities, which aimed to deliver its outputs. If these outputs were produced, as our theory suggested, then the Project’s intended outcomes should have been realised.

1.7 The aim of the theory-based approach, therefore, was to model the thinking (or assumptions) that underpinned the ESF-LSB Project, allowing us to identify the evidence needed to test whether the Project worked in the way it was intended to and achieved the outcomes that its sponsors hoped for. Importantly, adopting a theory-based approach also allowed us to identify assumptions made about the way the Project’s inputs, activities and outputs contributed to its outcomes. As is often the case with complex community-based projects, the theory itself may not hold true when examined against the actual evidence. But examining the evidence against the theory generates important learning about how the real-world implementation of a Project can differ from the initial view of how it was intended to work.

1.8 We started by examining evidence from official documents to determine the aims and objectives of the ESF-LSB Project and then discussed these in one-to-one interviews with national policy-makers. A literature review also fed into the development of the ToC by providing evidence on the likely outcomes of

---

⁴ Delivery projects had to finish by 31 December 2014 so that the Welsh Government could process claims through WEFO. The ESF end of the funding period for the overarching Project was May 2015.
collaborative activities, the determinants of collaborative capacity and learning in public service networks. Armed with this knowledge, we began to map out all of the potential causal links between various parts of the ToC.

1.9 Figure 1.1 illustrates the evaluation framework of the ESF-LSB Project. It contains six main elements.

- **Context**: It is important that the evaluation takes account of the heterogeneity of delivery projects and of the different social-economic, cultural and political contexts in which they are implemented. The ‘context’ box covers a range of such factors at both the national and local level and includes variables which distinguish different LSBs e.g. having different histories and trajectories of partnership working.

**Figure 1.1: ESF-LSB Project Evaluation Framework**

- **Inputs**: The evaluation needs to assess the resources (financial, time, people) which are needed to make the Project work, the funding allocated to the ESF-LSB Project to the delivery projects and the resources invested locally to implement the projects. The policy framework and any new legislation set out by the Welsh Government is also a significant input. Other inputs include the resources needed to manage the Project at the national level and leadership provided by the Welsh Government which
may include helping the delivery projects understand that their individual projects may contribute to improvement at the national scale.

- **Throughputs**: These occur at two main levels:
  - National - activities such as the application process, the recommendations on funding by the ESF-LSB Advisory Board, six monthly monitoring of the delivery projects and support on evaluation to the projects from the Welsh Government.
  - Local/regional - activities like the setting up of governance arrangements, creating project plans, signing collaborative protocols and agreements, informal networking, secondment placements, dissemination activities and reporting to Welsh Government. These activities are expected to lead to outputs, some of which are measured by WEFO indicators, as discussed in Chapter 2.

- **Outputs**: We identified two main types of outputs: improvements in collaborative capacity/capability and changes in organisations and services achieved as a result of the delivery projects. Both types include tangible outputs (e.g. written protocols) and intangible outputs (e.g. change in levels of trust). Markers of collaborative capacity include:
  - communication protocols between project partners;
  - leadership;
  - values;
  - vision (priorities and objectives);
  - coherence (bureaucracy, duplication etc.);
  - stability/turnover of key staff; and
  - levels of trust created amongst partners.

Organisational and service change includes:
- streamlining of processes which avoid duplication between partners;
- increased sharing of resources;
- improved levels of integration;
- more efficient service delivery models;
- creation of legal agreements;
- organisational redesign (i.e. greater emphasis on preventative approaches and targeted provision of services); and
• **Outcomes**: These include changes that deliver public service improvement for example:
  o cost savings;
  o improved access to services;
  o expansion of service provision;
  o better targeted services;
  o more responsive services to citizens’ needs; and
  o increased user satisfaction.

• **Impacts**: There is no clear-cut way of isolating the impact of the delivery projects (let alone the ESF-LSB Project) from other external or contextual factors, such as other sources of funding, which may equally impact on the local population. Moreover, many of the intended impacts may not be realised until after the end of the funded project.

• **Learning**: Learning underpins much of the design of the ESF-LSB Project and so key questions for the evaluation were:
  o how learning and ‘good practice’ is shared;
  o what type of stakeholders engage in learning; and
  o the impact that learning has.

**Developing and testing the Framework**
1.10 The design of the theory-based framework responded to the requirements of the Project evaluation i.e. to assess the outcomes of the ESF-LSB Project; examine the planning, implementation and management of the project; assess how the knowledge gained is communicated and disseminated; assess the outcomes of the project for the population wherever possible; and evaluate the extent to which the integration of the third sector leads to better outcomes.

1.11 Any theory of change needs to be plausible, doable and testable (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). In order to test whether the assumptions underpinning the design of the Project made sense and were practical to use as a framework for this evaluation, we held a workshop with key stakeholders from the ESF-LSB national team, other Welsh Government civil servants, and members of the...
ESF-LSB Steering Group in January 2013 to discuss their views and revise the model. We then presented the draft theory-based framework at the national Project Evaluation Workshop in February 2013.

1.12 Both of these discussions suggested that the evaluation needed to recognise the difficulty of delivering population outcomes. We were told that many of these outcomes are likely to occur after the lifetime of the projects and are the result of multiple factors and interventions and not just the ESF-LSB funding. Linked to this, we also heard that there was a need to understand the fluid environment in which the delivery projects are operating as a result of organisational, funding, environmental and policy changes.

1.13 We were also reminded about the varying role of the third sector in different projects which depends on the nature of the project and the role/capacity of relationship with the third sector locally. In addition, the WCVA-led ‘Making the Connections’ Project’, a third sector capacity-building programme, which was also an integral part of the ESF-LSB Development and Priority Delivery Project, was independently evaluated (Old Bell 3, 2015). It was important not to duplicate this evaluation and to take account of its findings wherever relevant to our work.

1.14 The evaluation framework provided a basis for identifying and bringing together the evidence from different kinds of delivery projects in a way which enables an overall assessment of the outcomes from the ESF-LSB Project and how the processes have contributed to these. The framework also informs the design of all research instruments so that questions are posed on the importance of contextual factors, different activities, the extent to which collaborative capacity and capability is important, how learning is disseminated and whether organisational and service change is produced.

1.15 The findings from our synthesis of evidence during the formative and summative phases of the evaluation have been used to test the assumptions underpinning the Project and keep its hypotheses under review.

1.16 This process was assisted through ‘joining up’ the process and outcomes evaluation and an integrated research design, even though these two aspects were let originally as two separate contracts by the Welsh Government.
Evidence and Methods

1.17 We now turn our attention towards the various methods of data collection used in the formative and summative phases of the evaluation to explore these issues.

Formative evaluation

1.18 The methodology for the formative phase of the evaluation included:
- literature review and development of the theory-based framework;
- scoping interviews with all delivery projects;
- two rounds of interviews with national stakeholders;
- baseline for a two-wave all-Wales Public Service Survey on collaboration;
- in-depth case studies of seven delivery projects; and
- analysis of discussions at three learning events.

1.19 The formative phase of the evaluation also included some research and data analysis to examine the potential content of socio-economic baselines for the ESF-LSB case studies. Given the difficulties in capturing population impact as discussed above, this exercise was designed to enable us to establish counterfactuals to assess the additionality of the ESF Project, focusing on the seven case studies. The proposed method for this was through before/after comparisons and analysis of outcomes achieved by the delivery project partnerships versus those in wider (non-eligible) areas.

1.20 The research showed that developing baselines from regularly published socio-economic data for the various ESF-LSB projects is quite difficult. Even where statistical material is available relating to ESF-LSB projects’ objectives, it is often subject to many environmental influences which make the identification of the additionality of the ESF funding problematic. For these reasons, many of the data collected and analysed were best considered as contextual for the aims pursued by the ESF-LSB projects.

1.21 We originally intended to use our discussions with national stakeholders, LSBs and Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) to develop a suite of process indicators which would allow for comparison and some aggregation across projects while enabling flexibility to reflect local conditions. In practice, the wide variation in both the scope of delivery projects and their capacity to collect data
meant we could not develop process indicators that could be quantified and aggregated across all projects. However, our discussions did inform qualitative process indicators on for example, collaborative capacity, the role of the project manager and leadership which were used for the topic guides for the case studies (and for the meta-analysis in the summative evaluation). This enabled a thematic analysis of key success factors across delivery projects.

1.22 As intended, the scoping interviews with the delivery projects, the national stakeholder interviews and the development of the ToC all assisted in refining the main research questions for the formative evaluation, which were then used to develop the lines of enquiry and detailed topic guides for the case studies. These are shown in Figure 1.2 below.
Figure 1.2: Main research questions for the formative evaluation

1. To what extent has the ESF-LSB Project improved services, or to what extent does it have the potential to improve services in the future?
   a. If so, which services, in what ways and how?
2. In what ways do project managers of the delivery projects and LSB support officers contribute to improved services, or how will they contribute to improvements in the future?
3. To what extent have these improved services impacted on beneficiaries?
   a. If so, who has benefited and how?
4. What efficiencies are planned to be delivered – to what extent have they been achieved? How have they been achieved?
5. To what extent has the ESF-LSB Project strengthened collaborative working – and in what ways?
   a. What have been the key enablers for this?
   b. What have been the barriers or limitations?
6. What have been the advantages of working in collaboration?
7. What have been the disadvantages of working in collaboration?
8. How far has the ESF-LSB Project helped to reduce silo working: 
   a. within and between organisations at the local level; and 
   b. within the Welsh Government?
9. Are there mechanisms other than collaboration for achieving the same sorts of outcomes that are being delivered/planned to be delivered?
10. What is the role of the third sector? To what extent – and how – has the ESF-LSB Project strengthened the participation of the third sector?
11. To what extent has this strengthened participation of the third sector contributed to improved services (and impacted on beneficiaries)?
    a. How might the advantages and disadvantages differ?
12. How has the ESF-LSB Project shared learning and ‘good practice’?
    a. With which stakeholders/audiences?
    b. What impact has this had?
13. Are there elements of the ESF-LSB Project which could be useful for others to learn from?

1.23 A summary of the findings from the analysis of these data is presented in the Final Formative Report and summarised in Chapter 2 of this report.
Summative evaluation

1.24 The summative phase of the evaluation aimed to provide an overall assessment of whether and how the outcomes of the ESF-LSB Project have been achieved. The methodology for this phase was designed to enable us to build on the findings in the Final Formative Report and comprised:

- secondary analysis of WEFO indicators showing output data from all delivery projects;
- review of evidence about how the Project has contributed to cross-cutting policy themes (equality, scrutiny and environmental sustainability);
- meta-analysis of evaluative material from a sample of 17 delivery projects. This drew on local evaluation reports and closure reports produced by the delivery projects to add insight to the findings from the thematic analysis of the case studies as presented in the formative report. The main research questions for this meta-analysis are shown in Figure 1.3 below;
- production of a set of ‘good practice vignettes’ drawn from the meta-analysis. These cover the themes of ‘third sector involvement’, ‘the role of the project manager’ and ‘legacy’ as well as two projects’ delivery of outcomes; and
- second wave of the all-Wales Public Service Survey on collaboration. This survey was sent to senior managers from across the whole Welsh public service, including the civil service, local government, health, police, fire and rescue, Communities First and the third sector. A total of 312 survey responses were received – a response rate of 25%.
Figure 1.3: Main research questions for meta-analysis in the summative phase

1. **Nature of collaboration**
   - To what extent was there an established culture of collaborative working in this LA/service area?
   - What was the motivation for seeking funding for the project/collaboration?
   - What governance and project management arrangements are in place?

2. **Collaborative culture and engagement**
   - What is the breadth and level of engagement in collaboration?
   - How open are communications between partners? (e.g. degree of trust, political tensions, clash of organisational cultures).
   - How has the project improved collaboration?

3. **Third Sector involvement**
   - How active and influential has the third sector been in practice? If less active/influential than planned/expected, what were the reasons for the difference?
   - What has been the role of the third sector in strategic decision making and/or operational service delivery?

4. **Role of the Project Manager**
   - What skills and behaviours has the project manager used to co-ordinate/drive collaboration?
   - Has the PM undertaken training/been provided with support and how has this enhanced his/her skills for collaboration?
   - Has she/he remained within the organisation after the end of the project?

5. **Leadership and the role of the LSB**
   - What leadership roles have the LSB and the LA(s) played in the project?
   - What role has been played by politicians?

6. **Outcomes**
   - How were the project’s outcomes determined and intended to be measured?
   - To what extent has the project achieved its desired outcomes? Have there been any unexpected outcomes?
   - To what extent has the project improved processes and collaborative capacity/infrastructure?
   - Did the project set ambitious and realistic outcomes?

7. **Sustainability**
   - What is the likelihood of the project continuing after ESF funding?
   - To what extent has the project (and/or its successor/legacy activities) been affected by proposals for local government reform?
   - What plans are in place to ensure that the project has a long-lasting effect?

8. **Learning from the project**
   - What has been the approach to/style of learning within the project?
   - What has helped learning to be shared?
   - What has hindered the amount of learning taking place?

9. **Enablers and barriers of effective collaborative working**
   - What have been the main enablers and barriers to achieving outcomes through collaboration?
Structure of this report

1.25 Chapter 2 begins by providing a summary of findings and conclusions from the formative phase of the evaluation of the ESF-LSB Project as presented in the Final Formative Report. The chapter then presents a secondary analysis of project outputs as measured by the WEFO indicators. It then discusses the contribution that the Project has made to the Welsh Government's cross-cutting policy themes of equality, scrutiny and environmental sustainability.

1.26 Chapter 3 reports on the meta-analysis of evaluative material from 17 delivery projects. The thematic analysis identifies enablers (success factors) for and barriers to achieving outcomes through collaborative working. This discussion is illustrated with ‘good practice’ vignettes from two delivery projects and across three themes - ‘third sector involvement’, ‘the role of the project manager’ and ‘legacy’. These have been written to encourage and enable wider replication of the practice and learning from delivery projects – to other areas and/or different types of partnerships.

1.27 Chapter 4 presents the findings of all-Wales Public Services surveys which were conducted during the summers of 2013 and 2015. The results of the 2015 survey are used to assess change in collaborative working in delivery projects and other partnerships since 2013 as well as providing a source of evidence to test the assumptions of the ToC around collaboration and address the overall aims of the evaluation.

1.28 Chapter 5 draws together our findings from all of these sources to provide conclusions on the outcomes from and effectiveness of the ESF-LSB Project. It does this through addressing each of the four key evaluation questions:

- whether and how the ESF-LSB Project has led to better public services and outcomes for citizens;
- how the processes by which the Project has been implemented and managed have contributed to these outcomes;
- whether and how the Project is communicating and disseminating learning from the delivery projects, nationally and locally; and
- how the Project has improved the integration of the third sector with LSBs, whether this has led to better services and outcomes.
1.29 Chapter 5 then reviews the recommendations for the Welsh Government and its partners from the Final Formative Report - and their response to these – and uses these to produce a final set of recommendations to enable the learning from the ESF-LSB project to be replicated beyond the lifetime of the projects in a way that informs policy and practice, nationally and locally.
2. The Project’s progress and outputs

Introduction

2.1 The evaluation of the ESF-LSB project has been collecting and analysing data on outputs and outcomes from the delivery projects to address the key evaluation questions and to test and review the evaluation framework.

2.2 The summative phase of the evaluation has been informed by and builds on the findings from the formative phase and has included a review of the outputs from across the delivery projects as measured through the WEFO indicators and evidence about their contribution to the Welsh Government’s cross-cutting policy issues.

Findings from the formative phase

2.3 The findings in the Final Formative Report drew on four main sources of evidence as outlined in the methodology described in Chapter 1 above:

- two rounds of interviews with national stakeholders;
- an all-Wales Public Service Survey on collaboration;
- in-depth case studies of seven delivery projects; and
- analysis of discussions at three learning events.

2.4 The formative evaluation’s findings led us to conclude that there was some way to go before we could assess whether the ESF-LSB Project had led to better public services and better outcomes for citizens (although there were some exemplar delivery projects), and there were questions about whether it would be possible to demonstrate these outcomes.

2.5 We also found that most delivery projects needed to improve collaboration – through improved collaborative capacity and organisational change - before being able to deliver the type of public service improvements that would lead to improved outcomes for service users. This raised questions about whether these would be achievable within the lifetime of the funded delivery projects.

2.6 In addition, the majority of the delivery projects had experienced difficulties in identifying ambitious and realistic outcomes, developing measures to evidence
these and collecting, analysing and using monitoring and evaluation data to review progress against outcomes.

2.7 Our synthesis of seven case studies revealed some common patterns with regard to impacts, processes (including enabling factors and barriers to achieving impacts) and learning. We used these to identify seven core themes which were the main determinants of whether a project was making progress on collaboration and achieving service and/or process outcomes. These were:

- the nature of the collaboration;
- where the project sits within an organisation;
- the role of the project manager;
- how knowledge is shared;
- leadership and the role of the LSB;
- setting ambitious and realistic outcomes; and
- the sustainability of the project.

2.8 Facilitated discussion about ‘what works’ (in achieving outcomes) at the learning events in summer 2014 found that delivery projects had identified a number of common enabling factors, which echo those from the synthesis of case studies. In particular, projects identified:

- strong leadership, from someone with the authority and credibility to engage and galvanise partners;
- active buy-in from partners, not just being passively ‘on board’; and
- shared and clear objectives that bind all partners to action.

2.9 Involvement and integration of the third sector was noticeable mainly in the delivery projects that were either third sector-led and/or which relied heavily on the third sector for delivery. Unsurprisingly, there appeared to be little role for the third sector in projects that were less about citizen outcomes and more about back office improvements and internal change.

2.10 National stakeholders thought that the local third sector needed to be fully involved in collaborative service design – as well as delivery - and that this was not happening as much as it should have done across the Project or wider Welsh public service. The evidence around these issues is discussed in more detail in the evaluation of the Making the Connections element of the ESF-LSB
Project, which was geared specifically towards improving integration of the third sector (Old Bell 3, 2015).

2.11 While the delivery projects were, in some cases, testing out innovative approaches in delivering a specific service and sharing this through tacit and ad hoc learning within and between projects, this was not being disseminated systematically across Wales, either by the delivery projects themselves or the Welsh Government.

2.12 National stakeholders were keen to use learning from the delivery projects in policy guidance to LSBs and local authorities. They thought that this type of learning was needed to inform what is replicable across diverse areas and contexts and how to scale up from projects to mainstream delivery for sustainability.

2.13 We used these findings to make a series of recommendations for the Welsh Government and its partners to consider in order to address these issues in a way that maximised and disseminated the learning from the Project. These are discussed further in the final chapter of this summative report.

Analysis of WEFO monitoring data

2.14 The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) used four indicators to assess the success of the Project. These were the number of:

- dissemination initiatives - to share best practice on both a thematic and geographical basis;
- collaborative agreements between public service bodies - encompassing LSB partners using shared resources, pooling budgets or providing a shared service;
- secondment placements made available - to improve knowledge and skill transfer between public sector organisations; and
- organisational learning and development strategies produced - initiatives which support LSBs (and public sector organisations that are part of the LSB) to manage and deliver change.

2.15 Each delivery project set targets in their proposal for funding and were required to keep evidence and outline their performance against the WEFO indicators every quarter. Performance was monitored by the national team through
compliance visits and progress reports from the delivery projects. Each delivery project reported final figures in their closure report.

2.16 The Welsh Government had to meet ESF requirements by reporting performance against these indicators at the aggregate ESF-LSB Project level to WEFO. They did not report performance at the delivery project level. For our evaluation however, it is interesting to assess why some projects were able to exceed their targets as these are ‘outputs’ in our evaluation framework.

2.17 Our interviews with some members of the Advisory Board and the national team expressed concern that the WEFO indicators were too narrow and placed an emphasis on activities rather than outcomes. This makes it harder to learn from this Project compared to other ESF projects which have more tangible WEFO indicators that capture outcomes for beneficiaries - e.g. the number of people going into work or the number of people gaining qualifications.

2.18 These activity-focused indicators can also send the wrong message to projects that activities matter as they are being measured, when the focus should have been on improved outcomes for service users. As the 38 projects are so disparate, the indicators did at least provide an aggregated measure of performance, but not of outcomes.

2.19 Table 2.1 below lists how the 38 delivery projects performed on these indicators using figures which have been verified by the Welsh Government.
Table 2.1: ESF-LSB Project Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Total verified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination initiatives</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative agreements between public service bodies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondment positions available</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational learning and development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.20 Table 2.1 shows that, overall, the projects have achieved their targets in all four indicators. In two cases (dissemination initiatives and organisational learning and development), the totals achieved are more than five times greater than the target. The activities conducted in delivery projects were only claimed if the Welsh Government were certain that the evidence was in place.

2.21 On dissemination initiatives, the performance of a couple of projects stands out. Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways project achieved 37 dissemination initiatives (the large majority of which are 13 consultation events with young people and 17 presentations to partners) although its initial target was only four. The Conwy Joint Approach to Workforce Development project had a target of three initiatives but managed to achieve 17. This total includes two presentations to the LSB and another to the Improvement Board as well as having a stand at the National Training Federation Wales conference. The project realised the importance of involving young people and apprenticeships through a series of events as they could use this knowledge to better inform the provision offered by public organisations. This active engagement helped to improve the experiences of all - both young people and managers using apprenticeships.
2.22 These results clearly depend upon how projects have defined the measure i.e. a meeting with the LSB could be classed as a dissemination initiative by one project (as we have seen above) but regarded as being part and parcel of the running of another project. The problem of measuring outputs is a significant issue. In the Denbighshire project mentioned above, the aim was four types of initiatives but it was an aspect of their good practice that they designed each initiative to consult and engage with young people and partners in a wide range of settings.

2.23 Some projects did not provide sufficient evidence to the Welsh Government for them to be able to verify the performance they claimed. For example, Neath Port Talbot's Capacity and Capability project set a target of eight dissemination initiatives claimed nine but only two were verified. The Swansea Team Around the Family project set a target of three dissemination initiatives, claimed that they had achieved 39, but only five were verified to a sufficient standard for the Welsh Government to confidently claim to report to WEFO.

2.24 This raises an issue about whether evidence of the WEFO indicators was collected consistently across the projects. This may be partly because, in many cases, the targets were established during the very early stages of project development and often by people not subsequently involved in delivering the projects. As the projects developed over time, the indicators may have become less relevant and connected to their objectives and activities. It may also reflect the fact that the Welsh Government did not need to verify all indicators claimed by projects; the Welsh Government's claims to WEFO were based on aggregated data from across the Projects, requiring only a proportion of the combined Projects' activities to be verified.

2.25 A total of 30 collaborative agreements between public service bodies was the target for the 38 projects but more than double this was achieved. A number of projects managed to exceed their target of collaborative agreements. The North Wales ICT collaboration project set a target of one agreement but achieved six by using framework agreements to ensure value for money in procuring hardware, software and web content management systems. Our case study of this project revealed that project initiation documents (PIDs) were used. These were not legally bound agreements; they were in effect 'gentlemen's agreements' but gave flexibility to partners involved in the project to either join
or pull out at any point in time before achieving expected outcomes. The Joint Approach to Workforce Development project in Conwy achieved five collaborative agreements (target of two) and these service-level agreements were important for the successful running of the project as the organisations involved had such different arrangements in place (e.g. terms and conditions, holidays etc.).

2.26 There are more examples here, compared to dissemination initiatives, of projects not being able to deliver what was promised. For example, in Torfaen Powering Up only one terms of reference was produced when they set a target of four collaborative agreements. This difference stemmed from changes to the project being made after the proposal was funded. The original plan was for the council to sign agreements with housing associations and members of the Torfaen Energy Partnership. In reality, the project was hosted by Melin Homes, and the Torfaen Energy Partnership was largely dormant throughout the lifetime of the project.

2.27 The performance of delivery projects on secondment positions made available was better than the target (54 against 42) but this target was low averaging just about one secondment per project. The idea of secondments was to enable cross-fertilisation of ideas across the public sector and build-up the experience of (future) project managers. The Welsh Government pushed the use of secondments requiring all positions to be advertised as a secondment before following other options. The idea of moving from a permanent position to a fixed-term one at a time of recession was seen by some as a risk not worth taking, and meant that only six projects exceeded their target. The problem of recruiting project managers led most projects to a (very) delayed start.

2.28 The final indicator was the number of organisational learning and development strategies produced. These were defined as a set of learning initiatives that specifically support LSBs to collectively manage change and deliver LSB priorities. A target of five strategies was set and 27 were verified by the Welsh Government. Two projects produced evidence that they delivered more than one organisational learning and development strategy. The Merthyr Change Programme, for example, delivered five strategies which included providing change management training to all project staff; an awareness-raising workshop targeting existing services to promote the aims and vision of the
project; using the results of a baseline evaluation to change their approach; and a digital initiative to capture and share good practice and information on a range of employability topics.

Summary

2.29 Given that the WEFO indicators were used as one source of evidence to assess the success of the ESF-LSB Project, it was surprising that they were only mentioned in three of our seven case studies and there were mixed views on their utility. In one project, the indicators were described as being really useful as they provided a reminder of where the money is coming from and what the project is focused upon. In another project, the WEFO indicators were described as being 'pointless - it's ticking the box'. Respondents were unsure what the indicators were intending to achieve. As projects were required to report on the indicators to the Welsh Government on a quarterly basis, it is likely that they helped some projects to focus upon ensuring that they delivered what was promised.

2.30 There are a number of issues with the WEFO indicators that affect their usefulness. First, because the indicators are activities and outputs, it is not clear if and how they relate or contribute to the intended outcomes. Second, there are issues of defining and measuring the WEFO indicators. This occurs at two levels – for the projects in determining whether they have actually produced, for example, an ‘organisational learning and development strategy’ and for Welsh Government in ensuring that they have sufficient supporting evidence to make that claim to WEFO. More effort could have been placed on improving the understanding of what the indicators were measuring, why this was important and what evidence needed to be collected to show that a target had been delivered.

2.31 Third, the indicators are aggregated for ESF returns but meaning is lost without some exploration of performance in and between individual projects. While Welsh Government officials report that the indicators facilitated some discussion on activities which could be illuminated with examples from projects, our evidence from case studies suggest that they were of less use to projects themselves.
2.32 Fourth, it is important to not only focus upon the numbers. One project may have delivered a large number of dissemination initiatives but the quantity of events may be less important and effective than a carefully designed single initiative in another project. Fifth, there are potentially some examples of ‘good practice’ provided as evidence of achieving targets in the closure reports but these have not been distilled or shared by Welsh Government. Finally, while the diversity of projects produced a range of different outcomes, it was a lost opportunity for WEFO not to try and design some indicators that measured the more generic or high level outcomes using feedback from those affected by the projects.

Cross-cutting issues

2.33 The Welsh Government outlined a number of cross-cutting (or generic) themes which are common to all LSBs and where a consistent approach was needed to drive improvement. These themes were:

- citizen engagement;
- scrutiny;
- equalities; and
- sustainable development.

2.34 The plan was for the Welsh Government to co-ordinate action and facilitate learning opportunities (such as networks) on these themes to ensure that an effective learning loop exists between national policy development and local implementation. It was hoped that this would reduce the possibility of duplication of effort if different activities were conducted in each LSB, improve effectiveness of the available resources and lead to greater shared learning. The ESF resource would help to strengthen the capacity and expand the reach of existing networks in this area. Ultimately, it was hoped that the networks would become self-sustaining by the end of the Project.

2.35 Our interviews with national stakeholders revealed a mixed picture on the importance of these generic themes. For one Welsh Government official, the themes are fundamental to the way in which any organisation (in this case the LSB) is governed. For example, scrutiny needs to be built into the governance arrangements, hearing the 'voice' of citizens is paramount and doing an equalities impact assessment should not be the last thing you do. Our formative
evaluation reported concerns that "only lip-service is being paid to equalities" and concern about whether "scrutiny and democratic accountability are being built into [the projects'] governance arrangements". Another Welsh Government official seemed to take a more pragmatic approach by suggesting that while the themes of equality and sustainability are a priority for WEFO, it is difficult for delivery projects to demonstrate how they are positively impacting upon these themes. The interviewee thought that compliance with the WEFO targets for the overall Project would suffice.

2.36 To facilitate the integration of these themes, projects were asked to address how each of these themes was embedded in their proposal and then reported progress over time. Performance on these themes was reported to the ESF-LSB Advisory Board and to WEFO. There is little evidence on these themes and most relates to the organisation, not the project, but we summarise below how these four issues have been addressed.

Citizen engagement

2.37 The Welsh Government has used Participation Cymru to deliver training to public sector staff to support the citizen engagement theme and all LSBs have adopted the National Principles for Public Engagement. One project in particular had a citizen focus - Consultation and Engagement (Merthyr and RCT) - which has delivered a co-ordinated approach to consultation activity across and between the two LSBs.

Scrutiny

2.38 The Welsh Government commissioned the Centre for Public Scrutiny to provide general support to councils on scrutiny. A seconded scrutiny co-ordinator was also appointed to provide advice and guidance on scrutiny to LSBs. A series of bespoke events (e.g. seminars for both officers and councillors) were designed to help to promote scrutiny generally as a driver of public service improvement.

2.39 There was less focus on the scrutiny of LSBs specifically with the odd exception. For example, work was undertaken with Anglesey and Gwynedd's Joint Scrutiny LSB working group in developing collaborative scrutiny arrangements. This involved providing guidance, advice, briefing notes and
other resources at workshops with members and partners including North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Snowdonia National Park and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The performance of LSB scrutiny remains patchy (Horton, 2013). It is hoped that this support for scrutiny will provide the foundation for future statutory scrutiny of Public Service Boards.

**Equalities**

2.40 The Welsh Government has a strategic equality plan in place which underpins its work in this area and performance is measured against objectives in this plan. The proposal suggests that a network would be set up on this theme but this has not been delivered. Projects mostly report about organisational responses to equality such as suggesting that an Equal Opportunities Policy is in place. At a project level, it is reported that an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. A number of the projects have targeted particular groups of the population - from those suffering from financial exclusion in Conwy and Denbighshire to vulnerable families in Bridgend. Our survey evidence is positive in indicating improvement over time as 35% of respondents in 2015 agree that the ESF-LSB resource had enabled partners to promote equality (up from a low base of 22% in 2013).

**Sustainable development**

2.41 Each LSB has a Single Integrated Plan which includes a focus upon sustainable development. Projects largely reported that they conform to the council's policies in this area e.g. the organisation has an Environment Policy in place, but it hasn't been the driving force for many projects. Only around 20% of survey respondents report that ESF funding has allowed partners to promote environmental sustainability. A handful of projects have had environmental sustainability at their heart including Powering up Torfaen which aimed at reducing energy usage and costs for households through the installation of energy-saving measures and Low Carbon Swansea which developed a sustainable approach to reducing carbon emissions in the city.
Summary

2.42 There was a significant amount of rhetoric about the cross-cutting themes in both the proposal for EU funding and in proposals for funding from delivery projects, but they have not played out as being significant themes.

2.43 The Welsh Government asked about these cross-cutting issues in their monitoring visits to projects but there seemed to be an emphasis on ensuring that key policies were in place for audit purposes e.g. equality impact assessments. As these were outputs, they could be measured. For most LSBs however, this was simply 'business as usual' and, as they were already doing these things, there was little or no 'added value'.

2.44 Welsh Government needed to have done more to raise awareness of the themes at the start of the funding period through the use of workshops, and projects should have given greater thought to how they related to their project. While cross-cutting themes were reported on in the annual reports and at annual reviews, they did not feature in project evaluations and the Welsh Government did not request projects to report on them in their project closure reports.

2.45 There is little evidence from a range of documentation that projects have taken the generic themes seriously. As suggested above for the WEFO indicators, it is unclear whether any 'best practice' has been shared in any of these thematic areas. This could have formed part of a wider event on sharing knowledge from the ESF-LSB Project.
3. **Meta-analysis and good practice examples**

**Introduction**

3.1 This chapter discusses the findings from a meta-analysis of local evaluation material from 17 of the delivery projects and uses this to identify examples of good practice, which could be replicated more widely.

3.2 The projects for the meta-analysis were selected to provide a geographical and thematic spread of projects. We also ensured that projects had sufficient evidence from local evaluations for us to draw on, whether this was from an internal or external evaluation, so we excluded those projects which were only able to submit closure reports to the Welsh Government. In general, we omitted projects that had already been used as case studies for the formative phase of the evaluation, except for two projects\(^5\) where additional evaluation evidence had been produced since our visits. We also omitted the nine regional collaboration projects, which received additional funding from the WLGA and have been reviewed for an evaluation of Regional Collaborative Working being carried out for the Welsh Government\(^6\).

3.3 The list of delivery projects in the meta-analysis is shown in Table 3.1 below.

3.4 We conducted the meta-analysis using criteria, which were based on the ‘core themes’ that were identified from the synthesis of case studies in the formative evaluation report. These themes, which include contexts and processes, were found to be important for a project to achieve its desired outcomes (or could act as barriers if they were lacking in a project). We identified seven core themes across our case studies. These were:

- the nature of the collaboration;
- where the project sits within an organisation;
- the role of the project manager;
- how knowledge is shared;
- leadership and the role of the LSB;
- setting ambitious and realistic outcomes; and
- the sustainability of the project.

---

\(^5\) Denbighshire Anti-poverty Project and Caerphilly Passport Project.

\(^6\) This is due to be completed in early 2016.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Of Project</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Policy theme</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Summary description of aims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgend Connecting Families</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Children and families</td>
<td>£372,147.60 (estimated) 3 years +</td>
<td>To provide an integrated support service that aids families make changes that will improve the situation for the family as a whole as well as the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea Team Around the Family</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Children and families</td>
<td>£406,151 Summer 2011-Dec 2014</td>
<td>To change the culture and working practices within multi-agency services in order to enhance outcomes for children, young people and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPT Building Capacity</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>Health and social care</td>
<td>£558,940 2011-2014</td>
<td>To create a shared capacity and capability for NPT LSB that can accelerate the transformation of local services based on efficiency savings and offering improved services to older people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCT Integrating Localities</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>Health and social care</td>
<td>£965,088.10 April 2013– Dec 2014</td>
<td>To ensure the local delivery of key WG policy documents promoting integration of health and social care by effective locality working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPT Air Alert</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>£75,000 over 3 years</td>
<td>2011-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmarthenshire Advice and Support</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Anti-poverty</td>
<td>£173,298 2011-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>Health and social care</td>
<td>£209,517 2012/3-2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caerphilly Passport</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>Employment and skills</td>
<td>£372,220 2012-2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conwy Joint Approach to Workforce Development</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Employment and training</td>
<td>£168,640 2012-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmarthenshire Success</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Employment and skills</td>
<td>£47,289 over 2 years</td>
<td>Jan 13-Dec 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Wales Third Sector Health and Social Care Brokers</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Health and social care</td>
<td>£398,000 over 2 years</td>
<td>Use of third sector to promote more integrated health and social care in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea Healthy Partnerships</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Health and social care</td>
<td>£73,976 over 12 months</td>
<td>To increase signposting and public/professional knowledge of the third sector provision through collaborative working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Employment and skills</td>
<td>£64,000 over 12 months</td>
<td>To improve co-ordinated support and provision for young people NEET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Change programme</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>Employment and skills</td>
<td>£538,100 (inc. from WLGA and WCVA) over 2 years</td>
<td>To develop and embed a culture across public sector organisations in five authorities (Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, RCT) that recognises the importance of work on health and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire Anti-poverty</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Anti-poverty</td>
<td>£241,300 from May 13–Dec 14</td>
<td>To address financial exclusion through co-ordinated delivery of advice and information services and joint staff training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmarthenshire Environment Partnership</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>£150,500 over 3 years Dec 2011-14</td>
<td>To bring about dialogue and sharing of good practice in matters relating to the environment and sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCT Consultation and Engagement</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>Citizen engagement</td>
<td>£282,481 Oct 2012- Dec 2014</td>
<td>To establish a joint consultation project that would enable a co-ordinated partnership approach to consultation activity across and between Merthyr Tydfil and RCT LSBS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 The findings from the meta-analysis have provided additional evidence about the importance of these core themes and have identified some others. We discuss each of these in turn below.

**The nature of the collaboration**

3.6 The formative report showed that there are a range of factors which help to determine the success of collaborative project work. These included whether there was an established culture of collaborative working; if there was a strategic approach in place; the attitudes of individual partner organisations toward the collaboration; and how organisations work in collaboration with the public or third sectors. In addition, the importance of trust and open communications between project partners helped to determine whether the collaboration ‘added value’ i.e. how it improved services in a way that could not have been provided by the individual partner organisations.

3.7 Our meta-analysis supports these findings and adds additional examples and insights.

3.8 Those projects that built on an existing collaboration, such as Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing, RCT Integrating Localities and West Wales Third Sector Brokers, appeared to be able to make progress more quickly. This was also helped by the ESF-funded project being able to learn from and build on a previous pilot project, as was the case for Carmarthenshire Advice and Support and Swansea Healthy Partnerships.

3.9 In contrast, those projects which were ‘starting from scratch’, experienced delays in delivery due to having to build an effective collaborative partnership (often dependent on appointing a project manager which was often delayed). This was particularly challenging for large transformational projects such as Merthyr Change, despite the needs analysis that had been conducted and the additional funding sources that it had secured from the Welsh Government, WLGA and WCVA.

3.10 Projects were more likely to make progress if they were clear about the aims of the projects and the need for the collaboration. Most projects in the meta-analysis saw collaboration as being important for improving service quality and reducing duplication (e.g. within provision for young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) through Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways) rather than making efficiencies or cash savings explicitly.

3.11 Some partnerships were specific about using the project to drive transformational change through new ways of working to address complex challenges (e.g. Merthyr Change, Swansea Healthy Partnerships). Others, such as Swansea Team Around the
Family and Bridgend Connecting Families, wanted to take a more holistic approach by designing services around individuals’ circumstances and life events rather than a more traditional ‘provider-led approach’ through a single organisation or department.

**Collaborative culture and engagement**

3.12 The synthesis of case studies in the formative report found that the location of the project within the organisational structure is important as it can influence the number of levers which can be pulled and what support the project receives. Specifically, where a project was located in a cross-cutting department as opposed to a specific service department, it could provide ‘organisational reach’. The meta-analysis developed this theme by exploring the extent to and mechanisms by which organisations achieved a ‘collaborative culture’ with a wide range of staff involved in collaborative working.

3.13 Good examples of this degree of staff engagement were visible in the Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways, NPT Capacity Building, Bridgend Connecting Families and Swansea Team Around the Family projects, which all established an integrated model of service delivery based on knowledge sharing and re-design through multi-partner engagement.

3.14 Other projects used specific methods of involving staff including through inter-disciplinary training (e.g. RCT Consultation and Engagement and Denbighshire Anti-poverty) and/or through encouraging membership of operational staff in task and finish groups such as in Conwy Workforce Development.

3.15 Several projects found it difficult to engage the NHS sufficiently for a number of reasons including Health Boards covering several local authorities and LSBs, different priorities and resource constraints. Examples of the effect of these various factors included the relative lack of the involvement of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, which covers the whole of North Wales, in Denbighshire’s Anti-Poverty project and the variable engagement of GPs in Swansea Healthy Partnerships.

3.16 Where health services were a key partner to the project and part of the original design (e.g. Swansea Team Around the Family, Third Sector Brokers), it was easier to engage them. In contrast, projects found it more difficult to involve Health Boards when they were not integral to the functioning of the project.

3.17 Beyond health, some projects experienced difficulties in involving other public sector partners. In the RCT Consultation and Engagement project, police and schools where...
these agencies didn’t (perhaps for good reason) make use of the joint consultation hub to the same extent as the two local authorities and the third sector.

Involvement of the Third Sector

3.18 The meta-analysis identified that there hadn’t been a lot of involvement of the third sector in the 17 delivery projects beyond being represented on project boards. The exceptions to this were projects that were specifically about harnessing third sector expertise. These included the NPT Building Capacity project and West Wales Third Sector Brokers’ Project, where third sector brokers were used for a new model of Intermediate Care and as the vehicle for managing operational collaboration in health and social care; the RCT Consultation and Engagement in Cwm Taf, where the third sector provided the inter-agency staff training; and for Swansea Healthy Partnerships where the third sector took a lead role in improving health care. Short, good practice vignettes for the latter three projects in relation to third sector involvement are shown below.\(^7\)

\(^7\) It should be noted that there were few comparable projects in this policy area so we have defined ‘good practice’ as processes that have contributed to achieving outcomes and should be transferable to other contexts, rather than ‘good practice’ in comparison with other similar projects.
Good practice in involving the Third Sector to improve service delivery

West Wales Third Sector Health and Social Care Brokers

Aims

As part of the move towards greater integration of health and social care (HSC), the project aimed to use ‘Third Sector brokers’ to ensure that third sector services could support the delivery of health and social care in a way that would increase service users’ awareness and take-up of these services. Another key aim of the project was to help to increase the capacity of the third sector.

The project covers Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. The brokers’ role involved connecting with people in need of support as well as linking up statutory services and the third sector.

Outcomes

- An independent, external evaluation of the project (Apteligen, 2014) found that it had a direct impact on clients’ ability to access services which are more appropriate to their needs with a majority of clients having been helped ‘a lot’ or ‘somewhat’ by the Third Sector Brokers’ role;
- over 80% of respondents to a survey of service providers agreed that brokers helped to better tailor support to client needs, reduce people’s reliance on statutory services and were a key enabler for sharing information between agencies;
- the project generated a positive return on the direct financial investment over two years; and
- the brokers’ role has become increasingly embedded as part of local service provision and an online directory of third sector services - InfoEngine - will remain after the two year project.

The broker role has also deepened the knowledge of spare capacity in the third sector and identified areas of need that this could be used to address. This has begun to translate into changes in third sector provision, although it will take longer to feed into county level commissioning processes.

Learning from what worked

The project learnt from – and built on - the success of a similar broker role in Pembrokeshire which had been running since 2009. This helped to raise the level of third sector involvement in care planning and cross-sector co-operation.

The five brokers were based in health and social care teams (in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, they worked primarily within integrated HSC community resource teams. In Ceredigion, they worked in a range of multi-disciplinary teams based in GP practices and in the community).

The brokers’ pro-active approach - as well as through cross-referral of clients and joint visits to assess clients’ needs with social workers – helped build relationships with statutory services.
"People have become aware of the brokers through community resource or multi-disciplinary team meetings. This is a direct result of the brokers' efforts to engage with groups of health and social care professionals. The brokers have also raised awareness through attending 'speed networking' events, a 'meet the funders' event, and a bereavement counsellors' workshop". (Apteligen, 2014)

Swansea Healthy Partnership

Aims

This project came about at a time when there was a push to have a greater level of involvement in the third sector due to finance and resource constraints. However, the level of collaboration before the project started was mixed - just over half of primary care staff referred into the third sector once a month or more.

In response, the project aimed to increase signposting and public and professional knowledge of third sector provision through collaborative working between the third and statutory sectors, supported by a project manager. The approach built on a successful pilot carried out by Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS) and involved over 48 organisations.

Outcomes

The project met the outcomes it was aiming to achieve\(^8\), including:

- increasing public and professional knowledge of third sector services;
- increasing signposting to third sector services;
- developing a good practice guide; and
- increasing collaboration between the third sector and health partners.

The extent of collaboration during the project was generally strong, although this varied and depended on the size of the GP practice and the level of engagement from staff within practices.

Learning from what worked

Using learning from the SCVS pilot project was invaluable in informing the roll-out of the Swansea Healthy Partnerships project. SCVS continued to play a major role in the project through:

- using its e-bulletin to promote the project; and
- implementing fortnightly information clinics.

Wider third sector involvement was also important including through:

- having information stands staffed by a third sector representative within GP practices, which allowed for direct collaboration and links to be made; and
- third sector organisations taking part in delivering a teaching session to Practice Nurses.

\(^8\) Although these outcomes do not appear to have been quantified.
Learning from the Healthy Partnerships project:

- fed into two trials in Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend; and
- was shared widely through a conference attended by 150 individuals from third sector organisations, GP practices and representatives from the City and County of Swansea, Abertawe Bro University Health Board and Welsh Government.

RCT Consultation and Engagement

Aims

Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Boards used ESF funding to establish a partnership project to enable a co-ordinated approach to consultation activity across and between the two LSBs.

Outcomes

The project has established:

- an Online Consultation Hub, which is well used by partner organisations to consult the public. This provides a ‘one stop shop to enable the public to have their say’ alongside a joint facility for survey software and data analysis;
- a Citizens Panel with 1,607 members, which is used for regular consultations; and
- a new Consultation Co-ordinator post in Merthyr Tydfil (to complement the existing mechanism in Rhondda Cynon Taf).

Partners say that the Hub has improved consultation as well as reducing costs and duplication, although these impacts have not been quantified.

There is ongoing commitment to support the Hub from the Regional Collaboration Board partners through agreement to fund it for at least 12 months following ESF funding. Follow on work is being undertaken to develop a new look Hub as well as a young person’s Hub.

A Joint Consultation and Engagement Strategy was launched in autumn 2014 at Community Voice events with a Public Engagement Group (PEG) established to develop and take forward the strategy.

Learning from what’s worked

The third sector was represented on the project’s Steering Group and active in both partnership discussions and delivery. The third sector led on the joint strategy and training delivered through Participation Cymru, while the two local authorities led on the Online Consultation Hub and Citizens Panel. (Other statutory services, such as the Health Board, Police and schools, were less involved.)

The staff training developed with Participation Cymru worked well. Ten courses were delivered to a total of 132 attendees.
3.19 Although there was potential scope for more third sector involvement in other projects, several types of barriers to this were reported including: a lack of capacity from the third sector (e.g. Carmarthenshire Advice), fragmentation of the third sector, perceived conflicts of interest; and insufficient thought given to the potential role of the third sector by the project. The last of these was demonstrated by the Denbighshire Anti-poverty project, which was council-led so the third sector, although represented on the Project Board, was involved to a lesser extent in design and delivery.

The role of the project manager

3.20 The formative report stressed how the evaluation had found that the project manager role was critical for the success of the delivery projects. This reflected through the broader move away from traditional public sector managerial approach and experience (i.e. transactional, hierarchical, usually in only one organisation) to the skills needed to lead partnerships (i.e. transformational, motivational, relationship management).

3.21 The meta-analysis confirmed this and explored the specific skills and competencies that a project manager needed to be effective, particularly in driving and/or supporting some of the above-mentioned aspects of collaboration such as partner and staff engagement, and new ways of working.

3.22 We found that whatever the policy or service area of the project, a project manager needed generic skills for relationship building and maintenance (e.g. communication and negotiation skills) as well as project management experience and skills (e.g. project planning and monitoring, PRINCE 2). An understanding of the project’s topic area was useful – and could help build credibility - but was not essential.

3.23 Projects which experienced delays in appointing their project manager (e.g. Merthyr Change), or where the post holder left and had to be replaced, recorded this as a major barrier to progress. This also showed the crucial role a project manager plays, albeit from a different perspective.

3.24 Short, good practice vignettes for Carmarthenshire Environment, Merthyr Change and Conwy Joint Workforce Development in relation to the role of the project manager are shown below.
Good practice in using the Project Manager role to improve service delivery

Carmarthenshire Environment

Aims

Carmarthenshire LSB applied for ESF funding specifically to create a dedicated post of ‘Environmental Partnership Development Officer’ (EPDO) to bring about dialogue and sharing of good practice in matters relating to the environment and sustainability. Prior to the EPDO role, the Environment Partnership – which includes Natural Resources Wales, Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) and Carmarthenshire Association for Voluntary Services (CAVS) - was supported by staff from CAVS, but the need for more structure, co-ordination and direction underpinned the rationale for the EPDO.

The EPDO played a number of roles including supporting the LSB to deliver challenging sustainable development targets; supporting the Environment Partnership to lead, co-ordinate, develop and project manage its activity, reporting to the LSB every six months; organising quarterly meetings of the Environment Partnership forum and executive committee; producing a monthly newsletter; using social media to raise awareness of the Environment Partnership’s work; and facilitating partnership meetings and events. In response to findings from the first stage local evaluation, the EPDO started to work more closely with the third sector and local communities, and with waste and sustainable transport colleagues.

Outcomes

The independent local evaluation found that partners were complimentary about the value and benefits of having a dedicated resource to co-ordinate the Environment Partnership (Cotyledon 2015). The role has added value to wider strategies and contributed to improved understanding of the climate change agenda. It has provided a forum for challenging thinking and raising discussions about the relevance of climate change to LSB partners, community and town councils and large organisations although there is scope to develop the level of collaboration with the private sector.

This improved collaboration and awareness has enabled Carmarthenshire to refocus its plans to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. In addition, the Council’s Community Challenge Grant, administered by the EPDO to support local access, biodiversity and enhance local environments, has been a success with communities and schools where funding and promotion has seen a range of projects supported.

Learning from what worked

Creating the single, dedicated EPDO role – and having an individual with the necessary skills – were both crucial to the Environment Partnership making progress. These skills included:
the ability to build relationships with a wide range of partner organisations;
- focusing the direction of Partnership working on outcomes and milestones;
- project co-ordination and management; and
- using a variety of means to communicate with and involve the wider community.

“The role is … complex and relies on strong relationships being built within the statutory and third sectors” (Cotyledon 2015)

Merthyr Change Programme

Aims

Through a change management process, the programme aimed to develop a culture across public sector organisations that encouraged staff to support people to recognise the importance of work and how it could improve their own health and well-being. The five LSBs involved were Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Five Change Management Officer (CMO) posts (one in each authority) were created to advocate, champion and implement a range of activities aiming to develop and embed cultural change. These included joint approaches to communicating aims and outcomes to the LSB, regional training for motivational interviewing, local shared action plans and the establishment of employability groups.

The activities of the CMOs was facilitated by a regional support framework that allowed them to work together, building new partnerships with organisations that have included registered social landlords (RSLs), the Police and Fire Service and some areas of the health and social care sectors particularly health visitors, and those working in children’s and youth services.

Outcomes

The independent local evaluation showed relatively small changes to ‘actions, attitudes and beliefs around tackling worklessness and its links to the wider health and wellbeing of residents of the Change programme area’ (Wavehill 2015).

However, it found that the wider beliefs about the aims of the project were well supported across local authorities, despite the relatively small reach of the project in the limited timeframe. This constraint was mainly due to difficulties in recruiting CMOs, which were essential to the project, but meant that full resources for project delivery in some areas were only available for 12-18 months.

Learning from what worked

The role of the Change Management Officers (CMOs) proved to be critical in the delivery of the Change programme. Those areas which had a CMO in post for a longer period made

---

Motivational interviewing is a technique used to help service users set goals and action plans.
noticeably more progress than those where the appointment was particularly delayed or where the post holder changed during the life of the project.

The local evaluation found that ‘a targeted resource enabled to drive forward progress within a change management agenda is critical in this kind of change management work to act as a champion and advocate of, and a developer of, programme activities’.

The evaluation also identified the key competencies that were necessary for the individual filling the CMO role to be effective. These include:

- skills in partnership and relationship building;
- an open working style; and
- the ability to seize new opportunities.

In addition, partners commented that the CMOs played a key role in advocating and championing joined up working as part of the project.

**Conwy Joint Approach to Workforce Development**

**Aims**

The public sector is the largest employer in Conwy and Denbighshire and although workforce planning and development was important to all the Conwy LSB Partners, there was limited work being undertaken between them. Conwy LSB wanted to see a shared commitment to a goal for more co-ordinated working around apprenticeships and quality work experience placements to improve employability within the local population, and especially among young people.

ESF funding was used to employ a project manager, who works with a Project Team (with representatives from Conwy CBC and Denbighshire CC, the local college, police, fire, health, housing, Conwy and Denbighshire CVC, and Snowdonia National Park Council) which meets bi-monthly.

Activities included World Café consultation events, run at the start of the project to get partners signed up, training events for staff from across the LSB partner organisations to improve partnership working, small Task and Finish Groups in order to produce specific pieces of work, an awareness raising event with managers across the public service to promote the value of apprenticeships as well as a large scale work experience consultation event with schools, young people and other stakeholders. A co-production workshop with apprentices to help design the ‘apprenticeship to employment pathway’ generated “some excellent ideas that hadn’t been previously thought of” (Conwy and Denbighshire LSB 2014a).

**Outcomes**

Positive responses to the project were received from surveys of apprentices and managers conducted for the internal evaluation. The number of apprenticeships across LSB partners has increased (from 92 in 2011–12 to 135 in 2013-14, although there is no data on the employment or further education plans of the apprenticeships that have ended.
The project led to cross-sector learning and support through coaching which has enabled partners to share skills and knowledge which will increase a shared capability to transform and improve the way that partnerships can work. A legacy action plan has been put in place to take the work forward beyond the end of the project, through the Joint Approach to Workforce Development Group. (The Project Manager has moved to a new post.)

Learning from what’s worked

It is unlikely that the project would have been able to achieve anything without someone responsible for co-ordinating actions across the partners. While the individual partners were involved in delivery and led on specific activities, the project manager role ensured co-ordination and kept up momentum.

The use of a Prince 2 methodology helped to keep the complex project on track and the risk management approach enabled the project manager to escalate high level risks to the Project Board where appropriate. This ensured there was a mechanism in place to ensure any risks and issues were dealt with by senior members of staff which then enabled them to ‘influence’ operational staff when required.

3.25 The projects included in the meta-analysis provided little evidence about whether and how project managers developed and shared skills while in post\(^{10}\). There was some limited evidence available that indicated the importance of a project manager acting as an enabler of others by developing and diffusing project management skills within the wider project team. This could help to avoid over-reliance on one person and contribute to the sustainability of the project beyond ESF funding. It wasn’t clear from the meta-review how much of this had been happening in the projects that we reviewed but there were instances of over-reliance on the project manager. For instance the RCT Consultation and Engagement project manager, although vital to the perceived success of the project, came across in the local evaluation report more as a ‘doer’ than an enabler of others.

3.26 As well as enabling others, the meta-review confirmed findings in the formative report about the importance of the project manager being supported by senior leadership from within the Project Board and wider project team. This ensures a project has strategic and operational leadership and is more likely to be sustainable.

---

\(^{10}\) This was a focus of the WLGA/ESF funded projects and is covered in the Evaluation of Regional Collaborative Working.
Leadership and the role of the LSB

3.27 The formative report asserted that leadership is a significant factor in every collaborative project and can be manifest in different ways, forms and levels. These include strategic leadership (i.e. managerial and political leadership; the role of the LSB in developing/initiating leadership within the individual projects; the support provided by the Welsh Government and local councils); distributed leadership (between different parts/levels of the organisation and across partners) and operational leadership.

3.28 Rather surprisingly, our meta-analysis found very few instances where leadership had been identified as an enabler by the local evaluations that had been carried out\textsuperscript{11}. Although it was clear that project managers had generally been playing an operational leadership role, there seemed to be a lack of strategic leadership for projects both within partner organisations and externally in bringing partners together.

3.29 In general there was little mention of political leadership in any of the projects’ documentation or evaluations although there were some exceptions such as for active member involvement in RCT Consultation and Engagement, which had been particularly important to sustaining the collaborative approach using a single ‘Hub’ through new member-led governance arrangements.

3.30 The meta-analysis identified varied levels of leadership from the LSBs. Local evaluations cited effective leadership from the LSB for the Denbighshire Anti-poverty project, Merthyr Change, RCT Integrating Localities and the Carmarthenshire Environment Partnership.

3.31 More commonly, LSB seemed to have been focused on designing the project, bidding for funding and then providing accountability to the Welsh Government through receiving progress reports from projects. There were few examples of the LSB providing active project management (e.g. when progress was not going to plan, partners became disengaged or outcomes were unlikely to be achieved) or planning for sustainability after ESF funding had ended.

3.32 Some local evaluations reported a ‘disconnect’ between the delivery project and the sponsoring LSB (such as for Conwy Workforce Engagement, NPT Building Capacity) usually because LSB priorities had changed since the project began.

3.33 Even when LSBs were actively engaged in projects, there was no evidence from the evaluations on whether and how they were taking opportunities to make connections

\textsuperscript{11} This may have been due to the way the local evaluations were commissioned in that they didn’t cover leadership explicitly whereas it was included in the topic guide for the formative phase case studies and the criteria for the meta-analysis.
and share knowledge and learning across the different projects that they sponsored\textsuperscript{12}. Examples of this potential would include Caerphilly (where Caerphilly Passport and Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing both required closer operational working between council departments and other agencies) and Merthyr Tydfil, where the LSB had sponsored two cultural change projects: Merthyr Change Programme and RCT Consultation and Engagement (which included Merthyr Tydfil).

**Setting ambitious and realistic outcomes**

3.34 Our meta-analysis reinforced messages in the formative evaluation report in relation to the factors that affect whether projects achieve their outcomes. These raised questions about whether projects set sufficiently ambitious, yet realistic, outcomes and to what extent these were likely to impact upon citizens.

3.35 Although the high level aims of projects included in the meta-analysis were generally clear, they were often over ambitious either in terms of the desired outcomes (e.g. major cultural change across five local authorities in Merthyr Change) and/or extent of the change envisaged in comparison to the timescale available (e.g. Carmarthenshire Success).

3.36 Some projects' outcomes were rather vague with no reasonable means of quantifying change and so they found it difficult to measure what they had achieved (e.g. RCT Integrating Localities). Other projects had outcomes that were genuinely difficult to measure, such as independence and well-being for vulnerable adults (in NPT Building Capacity) or raising public awareness of health services (part of West Wales Third Sector Brokers), although there was little evidence of attempts to develop (proxy) indicators to obtain some feedback from relevant service users and citizens. Several of the delivery projects, on discovering that their outcomes were not realistic, concentrated their evaluation efforts on assessing their progress towards outputs and/or intermediate outcomes around collaborative capacity.

3.37 Other projects had aims that were concerned with developing new, often innovative processes for service co-ordination or integration (e.g. West Wales Third Sector Brokers, Denbighshire Anti-poverty) or citizen engagement (e.g. RCT Consultation and Engagement) but didn’t measure how these would translate into improving outcomes for citizens (e.g. ability to influence decision making; use of information to maximise incomes) and didn’t collect sufficient feedback from service users on their perception of benefits for them.

\textsuperscript{12} As with leadership more generally, it may be that this was not addressed by the local evaluations but it did not appear either in these or in the projects’ closure reports under the sections on learning or sustainability.
3.38 The relative lack of strategic leadership in projects, as discussed above, may have been related to the apparent difficulties in establishing clear outcomes and priorities. In any event, the meta-analysis found little evidence on whether projects had achieved the service delivery outcomes that they had set themselves.

3.39 The evidence in most local evaluation reports as well as the projects' own closure reports was concerned with outputs (e.g. new activities in place), processes (e.g. changed service delivery arrangements) and sometimes process outcomes, such as an increase in collaborative capacity. One local evaluation report characterised its project as ‘a triumph of processes over outcomes’. Although this project had well-defined aims, “partners seemed unclear on how they would measure outcomes”.

3.40 Encouragingly, most local evaluation reports concluded that the process of working with other organisations had helped to improve partnership working and collaborative capacity. Examples include Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing; NPT Building Capacity; Carmarthenshire Success; West Wales Third Sector Brokers; and Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways. For many projects, however, this finding is reported as their main ‘outcome’, which means it is very difficult to get a sense of what outcomes the ESF-LSB Project overall produced, over and above the well evidenced improvements in collaborative capacity.

3.41 Several evaluations suggested that there would be a time-lag in closer collaboration leading to service improvements and outcomes for citizens but there was little evidence that more time would necessarily result in these outcomes being achieved.

3.42 Some projects did demonstrate good practice in establishing clear, ambitious, realistic and measurable outcomes and provided evidence on the achievement of these. Examples include Bridgend Connecting Families, which calculated a cost reduction which could be attributed to the project and Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways, which involved disengaged young people in co-designing the project to meet their needs and seeking feedback from them on whether and how it had improved their experience of seeking information and support. These two projects are used as ‘good practice case studies’ as shown below.
Good practice case study - Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways

Summary

Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways (PEP) was established to increase collaborative working, smarter commissioning and strategic co-ordination of provision for young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) across Conwy and Denbighshire and thereby decrease unnecessary duplication of services and increase the number of engaged 19+ young people.

The case study highlights several examples of good practice including: the value of engaging support from a wide range of organisations; the role of the project manager in using and sharing learning; improved partnership working; and how structured collaboration around a target group (19-24 year olds) can improve outcomes and reduce costs.

Context

In March 2012, Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board (LSB) heard from representatives from Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Careers Wales about the need for a more strategic, co-ordinated approach to tackling the increasing number of young people aged 19-24 who were NEET. This was reinforced by the Welsh Audit Office’s report ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training’ in July 2014, which highlighted that, while there were working practices already in place to reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET, there was a need to further develop partnership work in addressing the issues facing the unemployed 19-24 year olds.

Collaboration and engagement

In addition to the input from Conwy CBC and Denbighshire CC and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai (FE colleges across North Wales), the project benefited from the ongoing support of a number of organisations including Careers Wales, Job Centre Plus, North Denbighshire Communities First and Conwy Youth Service who helped to facilitate consultations.

The internal local evaluation by Conwy and Denbighshire LSB (2014b) found that the management of the project, board, groups, committees, meeting schedules and reporting structures illustrated a robust and highly effective partnership approach to the project. This ensured strategic ’buy in’, which led to operational implementation in the organisations involved, together with extensive sharing of information and practice and development and implementation of new practices.

"Partnership working was over and above expectations at the outset of what could be achieved … … … there is evidence that organisations who thought of clients as 'theirs' now work as a group of organisations that think of clients as 'ours' collectively". (Conwy and Denbighshire LSB 2014b)

Engaging with young people aged 19-24 NEET, to capture their experiences and views, was an integral part of the project. This included facilitated PEPTalk sessions with a video booth for young people to share their thoughts. Based on feedback from the PEPTalk sessions and a World Café event for Front Line Officers, the inter-agency PEPStep referral framework was developed to enable young people to identify their own support needs with whichever services they were in contact with.

Outcomes

The project achieved its objectives, which included:

- strengthened partnership working ‘at the front line’ through the development and use of the PEPStep referral form;
developed an Information Sharing Protocol (ISP), through the creation of an ISP Task and Finish Group, which incorporates the PEPStep referral form and comprehensive guidance notes;

improved the experience of 19–24 year old NEETs in seeking information and support;

completed a comprehensive mapping exercise of the services provided to support disengaged 19-24 year olds in Conwy and Denbighshire; and

increased collaborative capacity and culture within and between partner organisations “The project brought partners much more closely together in working both strategically and operationally rather than sometimes working in silos. The strategy and vision of the project has enabled the right people to be brought together in the same rooms to talk together about the issues and to collaborate to improve outcomes for young people” (Conwy and Denbighshire LSB 2014b).

It is worth noting that the project set outcomes that, although focused on improving collaborative capacity, were clear and manageable. As a relatively late starter, it had the benefit of some learning from the earlier projects where setting outcomes had been problematic.

Future plans/sustainability arrangements

The production of a PEP Improvement Plan and commitment from the strategic leaders of all partner organisations to implement the plan should ensure continued improvement of the outcomes for 19-24 year old disengaged young people building on what the PEP project has delivered.

The internal evaluation found that communications both inside as well as outside of partner organisations will be needed for this continued improvement and that this is an area for strategic partners to consider and plan for in their own organisations.

Approach to/style of learning within the project

The project sought out learning from elsewhere to inform its development and has shared good practice within Conwy, Denbighshire and the wider North Wales region. For example:

- The PEP Project Co-ordinator made links with similar projects in the UK in order to learn from their knowledge and experience in developing Progressive Engagement Pathways.
- A showcase event was held to launch the findings of the mapping exercises and share the findings and videos from the PEPTalk and World Cafe consultations.
- The North Wales Economic Ambition Board will use the PEP Improvement Plan as a reference source to inform the development of future projects to support young people aged 19-24.

Learning from good practice

The outcomes achieved by the Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways project, together with firm plans to build on these for future improvements, can be attributed to some key ‘success factors’, which could be replicated in other contexts as good practice. These include:

- A project manager with the requisite skills - The PEP Project Co-ordinator successfully built and maintained positive network relations across the region, and proactively promoted the aims of the project ensuring ongoing engagement and commitment in achieving the project’s objectives.
- Senior strategic leadership – through the active endorsement of the PEP Project Board and the impartiality of the Project Board Chair. This enabled the project to take
an innovative approach in meeting the project milestones e.g. through consultation and engagement of young people.

- **Wide engagement of partners** – the project benefited from input from a range of public sector organisations as well as from the voluntary sector, which was vital in engaging young people.
- **Involvement of staff at all levels** – the ISP Task and Finish Group and the PEPStep referral form enabled front line staff from across partner organisations to work together and improve outcomes for young people who were NEET.
- **Consultation and engagement of young people NEET** – through PEPTalk and to co-produce PEPStep.
- **Commitment to learning** – This was led by the PEP Project Co-ordinator, with active support from the project Board, to inform the project and to share findings within the project, between partner organisations and across the North Wales region.

### Good practice case study – Bridgend Connecting Families

#### Summary

Bridgend Connecting Families is an innovative, pilot family project which was established to support vulnerable families. The project aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families and to reduce service dependency through the promotion of positive behaviour and lifestyle changes. Evidence suggests that the project has reduced demands on public services and their local communities, involved good partner collaboration and provided families with life skills to improve their circumstances, as well as personal and interpersonal relations at large.

#### Context

A small number of families in need puts a larger demand upon public services. The project aimed to identify gaps in service provision and to acknowledge that children and their families are more likely to implement and sustain positive change if services are coherent and co-ordinated to meet the needs of families. Founded in August 2011, the project brought together partners from Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, the Department for Work and Pensions, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, the Probation Service and parts of the voluntary sector to provide an integrated support service that aids families make changes that will improve the situation for the family as a whole as well as the child.

#### Collaboration and engagement

The strong multi-agency engagement helped to provide a tailored service for the needs of complex and vulnerable families in moving forward and achieving change. The benefits of the collaborative approach to address a range of family needs were reported by both parents and professionals. The project benefited from seconded partner agency staff. The Connecting Families team itself consisted of 12 full/part-time staff employed through Bridgend County Borough Council and based in Children’s Services. The project also benefited from strong engagement with third sector organisations, by liaising with Wallich Clifford (a charity providing accommodation and support services for homeless people) and performing office-based tasks.
Outcomes
The Connecting Families project has achieved a number of outcomes in terms of direct cost savings of almost £1.5 million (with additional savings for individual services) and in improving long-term outcomes for children and their families. Key outcomes included the reduction of service dependency through the promotion of positive behaviour and lifestyle change as well as improved overall well-being and confidence of parents and families. This led to better child welfare and family relationships as well as positive relations with other services. A more detailed breakdown of the project’s main outcomes is provided below.

Outcomes for children, young people and their families:
- 148 families were supported through the full intervention.
- Over 150 children were identified as being at risk (either by having remained in the care of the family or by committing anti-social behaviour) and nearly 30 received further support by the service, mainly in the form of placement into rehabilitated homes.
- Over 70 children and young people have been de-registered from the Child Protection Register.
- More than 50 individuals received support for substance misuse.
- 33 children/young people have improved their school attendance.
- Nearly 10 families have been prevented from becoming homeless and fewer than 10 individuals have been supported into employment.

Cost saving:
Between August 2011 and December 2014, the evaluation and closure reports suggest that Connecting Families enabled the public sector agencies to reduce spending as following:
- Education - £446,403.
- Health - £35,984.
- Consultancy and training - £24,123.
- Housing - £148,994.
- Department for Works and Pensions - £22,142.
- Local Authority - £3,145,502.

Future plans/sustainability arrangements
According to professionals and project partners, the project has provided long-term and sustainable change for families by giving them the skills, tools and parenting practices to better manage family life and address future issues. Parents have also reported changes in the way they react to stressful situations. One professional working on the project argued: “the work undertaken by Connecting Families assisted the family in developing and strengthening skills which will benefit and contribute to the sustainability of the [project] plan” (Collicott, 2013).

Approach to/style of learning within the project
Learning within the project was acquired in a number of ways. Information on good practices as well as key challenges was shared both inside and outside of the project:
- Project workers recognised that there was a need to better communicate with the service users about the interventions chosen by key workers.
- Learning and service improvement can also benefit from wider engagement events and more extensive feedback by service users on the service being provided.
- The Bridgend County Borough Council ‘Families Together’ Strategy and the ‘integrated working framework’ (Department of Education) were incorporated into the project learning by identifying ways for implementing positive change for families by providing services which are coherent and co-ordinated.
Learning from good practice

A number of key ‘success factors’ may be considered as good practice:

- **Meeting client needs by multi-agency working.** The project outcomes demonstrated how combining various skills and services from both public and third sector organisations is important for reducing costs. Combining resources and expertise produced co-ordinated, intensive, holistic and timely support which tailors the ‘right service worker’ to the ‘right service user’.

- **Increased access to information: understanding individual hurdles and circumstances.** The project outcomes demonstrated how taking a straightforward approach to information sharing, where an information officer helps the key worker to build up a better understanding on the hurdles and circumstances that the family is faced by, is a key factor for delivering results.

- **Enlisting support from agency partners.** It was important to put families in direct contact with agency partners/local organisations instead of signposting them to seek help on their own.

- **Trust between service users and service providers and new skills for service users.** The project has demonstrated how a client-based approach empowers the service user and this helps in establishing trust and openness between service users and service providers. It also assists in sustaining positive change as well as equipping service users with motivation and new skills.

- **Senior strategic leadership.** The project was supported by the LSB to ensure that improved and effective service for vulnerable families is being delivered throughout the course of the project.
Sustainability and legacy

3.43 When we undertook the case studies during the formative phase of the evaluation, we found that they had real concerns regarding the future of projects once the ESF funding has run out.

3.44 A year or more on, the meta-analysis showed that there has been considerably more thinking on sustainability than we had anticipated. A sizable number of the projects had produced Legacy Plans including for Conwy Joint Workforce Development, Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing, RCT Consultation and Engagement, and Denbighshire Anti-poverty.

3.45 In some areas, there are plans for only parts of the project to continue (e.g. West Wales Third Sector Brokers) or for the project to operate at a reduced scale. So the Merthyr Change project is being sustained through retaining four out of the original five Change Management Officers (CMOs) in post. However, all of these plans have been produced relatively recently and most need to be operationalised.

3.46 Despite these plans, several projects are having difficulty in securing funding to cover the project manager role when the ESF grant finishes. This situation is being exacerbated by the current financial situation in the public sector as funding for project managers focused on improving collaboration may not be seen as a priority compared to maintaining specific front-line services. In turn, this raises a wider question of whether and how collaboration can be sustained without a dedicated project manager or with reduced project management capacity.

3.47 Some projects, such as Bridgend connecting families believe that the changes which have taken place during the course of the project will have a long lasting effect on families. As many of the changes have been adopted as ‘business as usual’, there is also confidence about maintaining positive progress and outcomes. A few other projects, notably Swansea Team Around the Family have managed to secure funds from alternative sources and so, in this example, they have been able to extend all contracts until March 2016.

3.48 Short, good practice vignettes for Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing and Conwy Joint Workforce development in relation to the legacy of the project in leading to improved service delivery in the future are shown below.

64
Good practice in ensuring the project leads to improved service delivery in the future

Conwy Joint Approach to Workforce Development

Aims

Given that the public sector is the largest employer in the area, workforce planning and development was seen by Conwy LSB and its partners as an important area for improvement. The project had four main objectives:

1. to co-ordinate current information available into a skills and training strategy across all partners;
2. to work collaboratively to increase the number of apprenticeships and the number of apprentices employed post-apprenticeship;
3. to develop a cross public sector staff exchange framework and coaching framework; and
4. to work collaboratively to improve work experience programmes for young people, adult returns and people with disabilities.

Outcomes

There is a concern with all projects that when funding comes to an end, the service delivery improvements finish with it. Conwy have taken various steps to try and ensure that this is not going to happen.

The project conducted its own evaluation and concluded that the large majority of the project outputs have been delivered and embedded (or are in the process of being embedded) within each organisation. A Skills and Training Strategy for Conwy has been produced and a memorandum of understanding has been signed by partners to agree to this new way of working in the future.

The number of apprenticeship places on offer across the LSB partners has increased over the lifetime of the project (from 114 in 2012-13 to 135 in 2013-14) but as the majority of these places come from the council, there is room for further engagement from other public sector partners. Survey evidence from managers and apprentices shows they are very positive about the placements, but there is currently a lack of evidence on whether apprenticeships have led to employment. The council and partners have recently held a careers workshop for post-apprenticeships and will be analysing the success of post-apprenticeships in future work.

The project has been least successful in delivering the third objective of the project. While a joint training course has increased the number of qualified coaches, a staff exchange framework has not been delivered.

Finally, a work experience framework has been produced alongside a support pack for managers and a work experience pack for placements. These are available on Conwy CBC intranet and website allowing partners to use these in the future. As with other projects, the focus has been placed on key outputs with an assumption that longer terms outcomes such
as cost efficiencies produced from improved partnership working will be realised in the future.

The project manager has moved to a new post and the project formally closed in December 2014, but a legacy action plan has been put in place to take this work forward which will be managed by the Joint Approach to Workforce Development Group.

Learning from what worked

As the Joint Approach to Workforce Development Group has been perceived by all partners to be successful, it will continue to meet quarterly to help drive improvements in this area. A new terms of reference and forward work plan for 2015-16 has been designed and the Group will be collectively responsible for implementing and developing the work produced to date. The Group will report outcomes on an annual basis to Conwy CBC’s Skills Group.

This project encompassed an area where all partner organisations were experiencing similar issues and could therefore see benefit from a co-ordinated approach to workforce development. World Café consultation events were run at the start of the project to get all partners signed-up and to get a collective understanding of how work experience and apprenticeships could be improved.

Attendance at training events from staff across the LSB partner organisations helped to improve partnership working. The evaluation suggested that staff ‘were able to learn a lot about each other’s organisations, breaking down some of the cultural barriers. They felt that they could take this back into their daily work to improve partnership working in the future’. This helped to set the foundations for future working relationships across partners after the funding has ended.

The project built on existing joint working on workforce development. For example, in 2010 Conwy CBC and partners worked together to organise a Jobs Fair which was well attended and received good feedback. A number of other joint events took place in advance of applying for EU funding.

The project conducted an independent mid and end project Gateway Review which ensured the project team and board were given the opportunity to voice any issues about what was going well and not so well and to plan for the future.

This project is also used as an example of the important role played by the project manager as they professionalised the existing informal arrangements between partners and helped to drive improvements in service delivery. To ensure that there is some continuity and leadership, the existing project team Chair will act as the main contact following the closure of the project.
Caerphilly Personal Information Sharing

Aims

The background to the project is the perennial problem of sharing data with organisations in the public sector (in particular with health, but also with the police and the voluntary sector).

The project built upon previous work conducted by the Caerphilly LSB in 2008 which created Information Sharing Protocols (ISPs) on daycentres (between the council, the health board and the voluntary sector), mental health and education. This project was regarded as a success and the ESF resource was aimed at supporting personal data sharing across public, private and third sector organisations in the Caerphilly LSB region by:

1. Developing Wales Accord for Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) Information Sharing Protocols for data sharing communities that find information sharing an obstacle to co-operation;
2. reviewing existing WASPI ISPs and converting non-WASPI ISPs into the WASPI format to provide consistency; and
3. developing and delivering multi-agency data sharing training to provide confidence in sharing information.

Outcomes

Despite delays in getting the project started, the independent evaluation reveals that it delivered six ISPs as outlined in the application. A training framework has also been designed. This has not been delivered to the vast majority of potential beneficiaries within partner organisations at the time of the independent evaluation, so it is difficult to assess outcomes.

There were issues at the time of project closure about which organisation was going to host and maintain the e-learning course. One of the interviewees in the evaluation makes it clear how crucial this is by saying that, “Updating and maintaining training resources would need to be a group activity – so ongoing commitment is needed from partners, as well as facilitation from a project officer. Without this, momentum could be lost and the training products could become outdated and fragmented as individual partners go off in different directions”. Rather than relying upon one organisation, the e-learning output of the project has been continued by tapping into the ‘All Wales Academy’ (a partnership between local councils, the WLGA and Wales TUC which was funded by the EU) so that the module is now available bilingually across Wales. There is also the possibility of further funding which will provide more opportunity to evaluate the project and to explore bringing in the wider public sector, not just local authorities.

According to the independent evaluation, the project provided benefit to organisations beyond that of simply generating information sharing protocols. Improved partnership working results from better understanding of the needs of other organisations: “The ISP project has the potential to add value through bringing organisations together to work through the document and better understand each other’s needs. In some cases this will
just lead to minor tweaks to existing practice, however there’s the potential for much more significant changes where practice and process is less established”.

The project has improved knowledge across public sector partners. For instance, the training events dispelled the commonly held misperception that the Data Protection Act prevents personal information sharing. This had been one of the most often cited barriers to personal information sharing within the study.

The application for funding mentioned improving service delivery for the citizen, but the evaluation found that most attention has been devoted to assessing performance against activities e.g. identifying working groups to develop new ISPs, than examining potential outcomes. This finding reflects the relatively short time-frame of the projects and, in this project particularly, the difficulty in assessing the direct impact of the project on service users as a result of the intended process outcomes.

Learning from what worked

The project asked the evaluators to carry out an additional piece of work to produce a benefits realisation and action plan for the LSB to progress the benefits beyond the life of the project. The LSB considered the evaluation report and recommended that the work is continued in close collaboration with neighbouring local authorities. This ties into the national WASPI approach of embedding WASPI by finding regional methods of quality assuring and overseeing WASPI work.

Each partner organisation is currently working together informally and a number of WASPI ISP developments are ongoing. Individuals are taking advantage of the WASPI Team’s ‘Train the Trainer events’ to upskill existing WASPI Facilitators to make sure they can train more facilitators internally within each LSB.

The Project Steering Group will continue to meet beyond the end of the project to ensure all ISPs are reviewed regularly, that progress is checked against the action plan and publicise the project at future events.

As in the Conwy Joint Approach to Workforce Development project, it was important to get all organisations signed-up to the aims of the project at the earliest opportunity. For example, the third sector (through the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations) were members of the Project Steering Group and involved in initial discussions on information sharing improvements that can traditionally be dominated by the public sector.

Learning

3.49 The formative evaluation report drew on our synthesis of case studies to show that while there was evidence that learning has taken place across different levels - from individuals attending training events to the team level where improvements have been made to processes over time - there was less evidence that organisations have learnt from the delivery projects and that new ways of working have been imbedded.
3.50 The meta-analysis reinforces this finding with most learning being shared within project teams and often being used to improve processes as the project progressed, such as by Air Alert (which was set up as a pilot for learning from) and Caerphilly Passport. In contrast, there was little evidence about what partner organisations had learnt from the projects. Indeed, in some projects sharing information – let alone learning - across and within services and/or partners remained a key issue.

3.51 While there was evidence that projects had held dissemination events to encourage learning (e.g. a conference in Caerphilly, workshops in Conwy, a legacy event in RCT), it was unclear whether these had actually increased LSB and partner organisations’ knowledge and understanding of the projects in a way which would help them embed or replicate successful approaches.

3.52 A few projects had made connections with other similar projects. Caerphilly Passport went to visit other local authorities which were taking a similar approach to improving employment support from public sector employers and the two projects using third sector brokers shared learning. Bridgend Team Around the Family project has developed a ‘good practice model’ with scope for being rolled out into other settings.

3.53 It is unclear why learning has not been more widely shared both within and across projects although explanations for this could include a lack of a learning culture, not seeing the relevance of other projects to ‘your own’ and/or that project managers feel they too have been busy delivering their own project to seek and/or share learning with others.

3.54 There were indications that projects in the meta-analysis had looked to Welsh Government to facilitate learning beyond the project, rather than encourage this independently with perhaps other local authorities or the LSB playing a lead role in this respect. Both the case studies and meta-analysis reinforced findings from the national learning events held during the formative phase of the evaluation, which found that the series of regional networking events in North Wales were hugely appreciated and had encouraged the sharing of learning throughout the period of ESF funding. These were facilitated by a member of the national team and were open to LSBs, local authorities and other partners as well as delivery projects.

3.55 The Welsh Government intended originally that similar regional learning networks could take place in South-east and South-west Wales. Two inaugural events took place but then resource constraints meant the networks did not continue. Perhaps related to this, there was little evidence that learning from the delivery projects had been shared with national stakeholders.
Chapter summary

3.56 This section has discussed findings from the meta-analysis in relation to key themes or factors that affect the success of delivery projects in achieving their aims and desired outcomes.

3.57 We have identified these as:

- the role, skills and capacity of the project manager;
- whether there are pre-existing collaborative partnerships;
- the active engagement of all partner organisations;
- the involvement of staff at all levels and from different roles;
- engagement of service users through co-production and feedback;
- clear project aims linked to a rationale for collaboration;
- having ambitious, realistic and measurable outcomes; and
- a funded, legacy plan to sustain progress and outcomes.

3.58 These success factors when in place, have helped projects overcome a number of external challenges that project evaluations and closure reports highlighted as barriers to progress. These included welfare reform and the current financial climate, which could both act to increase demand for services as well as making it more difficult to invest in transformational change.

3.59 As demonstrated through the good practice vignettes interspersed throughout the chapter, projects found that the skills and capacity of the project manager were crucial in co-ordinating and motivating all partners to work collaboratively. The meta-analysis also showed that the project manager's operational role was most effective when combined with senior, strategic leadership.

3.60 There was a lack of this strategic leadership in many projects, including from the LSB. This is ironic, given the focus of the ESF-LSB Development and Delivery Project on capacity building for collaboration. It is also likely to affect the ability of LSBs to learn from, embed and replicate good practice from approaches taken by the projects.

3.61 The consistent engagement of all partners was also essential for projects to increase collaborative capacity and achieve outcomes. This engagement varied across projects and between partners but, except for the examples described in the relevant vignette, we found that the third sector had not been involved in projects to the extent that was originally envisaged either by the Welsh Government and WCVA or by the projects themselves. The meta-analysis showed that although projects had engaged in
learning, this was mainly through informal and tacit sharing of knowledge and understanding of the project within the project team. There was little evidence of attempts to share learning with other areas or with national stakeholders, unless this had been facilitated by Welsh Government. When projects or LSBs had initiated structured opportunities to share learning about their projects within their local areas or regions, this seemed to have helped with legacy planning to sustain the project and/or embed its approach as ‘business as usual’.
4. All-Wales Public Services Survey

Introduction

4.1 This chapter sets out the findings from the second all-Wales Public Services Survey to establish a final analysis of the extent of collaboration within and between the public and third sector in delivering public services.

4.2 The survey design was informed by findings from the literature review, the development of the theory-based framework, and previous evaluations of local government policy carried out in Wales. The survey aimed at measuring current capacity and effectiveness of collaborative working in public services, of leadership and innovation, ways of enhancing collaboration and barriers to effective collaboration, and the impact of the funding on the projects. Participants were asked for their perceptions of the following topics that were covered by the questionnaire:

- the context in which the project/partnership is operating;
- the focus of the project/partnership and its set up (who is involved and to what extent), the collaborative capacity of members;
- the delivery of the project/partnership – leadership, behaviours and integration between members;
- the support the project receives from members and the ESF-LSB national team and Welsh Government more widely; and
- the impact of the funding and the success of projects against their stated aims.

4.3 This survey was designed to analyse change over time, in making comparisons to the baseline survey and the impact and additionality of the ESF funding. The questionnaire, therefore, varied very little between the formative and summative stage.

4.4 This chapter reports the individual perceptions of those working on collaborations in the Welsh public sector. A wide range of external factors can influence these perceptions, so it is important to triangulate this source of evidence with documentary analysis and interviews in our case studies.

4.5 Where significant differences are referred to, they are based on a t-test at a 95% level of confidence. Testing for significance was important to ensure any perceived differences were not simply due to the survey samples being non-equivalent.
Methodology

4.6 We conducted an online survey among senior managers from across the whole Welsh public service, including the civil service, local government, health, police, fire and rescue, Communities First and the third sector. The survey was open for response between 28th April and 5th June 2015. Five invites/reminders were sent to non-responders. Where a telephone number was available, potential participants were phoned to remind them about the survey and to offer them the opportunity to complete the survey over the phone. In all, 312 survey responses were received which is a response rate of 25%\(^\text{13}\). In total, 82 responses were received from ESF-LSB delivery projects\(^\text{14}\) (compared with 125 in 2013) and 210 responses from other partnerships. Other partnerships were included within both the baseline and follow-up survey to act as a comparison with the ESF-LSB delivery projects in terms of public services partnership/project working in Wales. Those who completed the baseline survey and agreed to participate in the follow-up survey were re-contacted to complete the follow-up survey, 102 of the 312 survey respondents completed both the baseline and follow-up survey.

Profile of response

4.7 Around a quarter of responses received (82, 26\%) were from participants involved in ESF-LSB delivery projects, of these 14 were answering in relation to WLGA RPB projects. The remaining 230 responses were from those involved in partnerships involving their Local Service Board (110), Regional Partnership Board (43), Communities First Partnership (42) or involved in some other partnership working (35) (see Figure 4.1). For the purposes of analysis, ESF-LSB delivery projects have been compared to a combined ‘other partnerships’ grouping including those from the Local Service Board, Regional Partnership Board, Communities First Partnership and those involved in some other partnership working.

\(^{13}\)Twenty-five per cent represents a good response rate for the follow-up survey as a number of the project members/managers had moved on from the positions they held when the baseline survey was conducted in 2013.

\(^{14}\)The 82 interviews with individuals from ESF-LSB delivery projects covered a total of 32 different ESF-LSB delivery projects.
4.8 To understand the context of the Project/partnership, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they disagreed with statements about the background, history and the support received by the Project and partnerships. The proportions of participants that strongly disagreed (those who gave a score of six or seven out of seven) or strongly agreed (those who gave a score of one or two out of seven) are shown in Figure 4.2.

4.9 For ESF-LSB delivery projects the statement receiving the highest level of agreement was ‘Formation of the project/partnership(s) was initiated by local organisations’ (56%), whereas those answering about other partnerships were most likely to agree that ‘The population served by the project/partnership(s) had very diverse needs’ (68% - significantly higher than the 54% of those answering on ESF-LSB delivery projects).

4.10 Just under two-fifths (38%) of participants involved with ESF-LSB projects agreed that ‘The project/partnership(s) had enough access to funding. This was significantly higher than the proportion that strongly agreed with this statement among those involved with other partnerships (10%).
### Figure 4.2: History of and support received by the project or partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>% rating agreement with statements as 1 or 2 out of 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of the project / partnership(s) was initiated by local organisations</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The population served by the project / partnership(s) had very diverse needs</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>66%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project had / partnership(s) have enough access to advice and support</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisations working in the project were / partnership(s) are themselves changing rapidly</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>50%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project had / the partnership(s) had enough access to funding</td>
<td>32%*</td>
<td>38%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>32%*</td>
<td>38%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>14%*</td>
<td>30%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problems the project was / partnership(s) is trying to address were / are changing rapidly</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Denotes significant difference within wave
Denotes significant difference between waves

---

### Project/Partnership Focus

4.11 All ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships were asked about the main focus of their projects/partnerships so we could establish the extent to which we are comparing like with like across the ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships.

4.12 Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 show the proportion of participants that rated each statement as a “major focus” (a score of one or two – shown in green on the right of the chart) and those who said it was “not really a focus at all” (a score of six or seven – shown in red on the left of the chart). In 2015, participants were asked the extent to which the project focused on two additional elements: ‘Increasing the voluntary/third sector’s role in the planning and design of services’ and ‘Improving outcomes for residents in the area covered by the project/partnership’.

---

15 The rating scale for the main focus of projects/partnerships statements is the reverse to the majority of scales discussed within this section of the report (i.e. six or seven out of seven indicates a ‘negative’ response rather than a one or two out of seven, and one or two indicates a ‘positive’ response rather than a six or seven out of seven).
**Figure 4.3: The main focus of projects/partnerships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering more joined-up services</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing together skills and resources of different organisations</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering better services</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing knowledge</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave
** Denotes significant difference between waves

**Figure 4.4: The main focus of projects/partnerships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving outcomes for residents in the area covered by the project / partnership</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging a wide variety of stakeholders</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding new solutions to the problems facing the area</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling ‘cross cutting issues’</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave
** Denotes significant difference between waves

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)
2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)
4.13 In 2015, the main focus of the ESF-LSB funded projects were reported as being ‘delivering more joined-up services’, ‘bringing together the skills and resources of different organisations’ and ‘delivering better services’ (56%, 55% and 52% respectively – shown in Figure 4.3).

4.14 As was the case in 2013, fewer delivery projects identified increasing citizens’ engagement in decisions about service provision and increasing the voluntary/third sector’s role in service delivery as a focus (28% and 27% of projects respectively said this was a major focus - shown in Figure 4.5). Also in 2015, relatively few reported increasing the voluntary/third sector’s role in the planning and design of services as a major focus (24% of projects said this was a major focus - shown in Figure 4.5). This is despite these elements being key aims of the ESF Project as a whole.

4.15 On the whole, the proportion of delivery projects and other partnerships focused on each aim was reasonably similar within both the baseline and follow-up survey. The significant fall in responses over time for other partnerships is signified by the blue arrows in Figure 4.5.

4.16 In the 2015 follow-up survey, there were a number of elements that ESF-LSB delivery projects were significantly more likely than other partnerships to respond were not a focus at all (a score of six or seven out of seven): including ‘improving outcomes for residents in the area covered by the project/partnership’, ‘delivering more joined-up services’, ‘sharing knowledge’, ‘finding new solutions to the problems facing the area’, “Engaging citizens in decisions about service provision

Securing external funding from government

Reducing costs of service provision

Increasing the voluntary/third sector’s role in service delivery

Increasing the voluntary/third sector’s role in planning and design

Denotes significant difference between waves

Denotes significant difference within wave

* Denotes significant difference between waves

Question not asked in 2013

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)

2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)
‘bringing together the skills and resources of different organisations’, ‘engaging a wide variety of stakeholders’, ‘engaging citizens in decisions about service provision’ and ‘reducing costs of service provision’. It is surprising that there is a perception of reducing the focus on delivering more joined-up services.

**Project/Partnership Delivery**

4.17 The survey asked a number of questions about how the project/partnership delivery was conducted. These focused in particular on the role of project managers, the nature of partnership working and the level of integration achieved.

**Project managers of ESF-LSB delivery projects**

4.18 The formative evaluation demonstrated that project managers are central to the ESF-LSB delivery projects. Indeed for the majority of ESF-LSB delivery projects, the ESF funding was provided in order to fund a project manager role specifically.

4.19 In order to understand the effectiveness of project managers, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements regarding the project manager role on a scale of one to seven, where one represented “strongly disagree” and seven “strongly agree”. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 below shows the proportion of participants who gave a score of six or seven in regards to agreement with each of the statements. It is worth noting that, for both the baseline and follow-up survey, in some cases the participant was the project manager themselves (16 responses in both surveys). Whilst project managers had a slight tendency to be more positive about themselves than the other project members did, this did not significantly alter the overall figures.

4.20 In 2015, just over three-fifths of participants involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed with the statements that the project manager for their project ‘kept partners committed to the project’ and ‘encouraged the project to consider new ideas’ (63% and 61% respectively). Between two-fifths and half of respondents strongly agreed with all other prompted statements about the project manager. These are positive results, but it is important to bear in mind that the perception of how well the project was managed may not always reflect the performance of the project as a whole.

4.21 There are some areas for concern within the extent of agreement for some of the statements regarding the project manager role. One in 10 ESF-LSB delivery projects disagreed that the project manager had the influence to get things done (10% rated
this as a one or two out of seven). Also given the importance of the project manager role, it is a concern that only two-fifths agreed that the project manager had received the appropriate training (40% rated this as a six or seven out of seven)\footnote{No training for delivery staff was provided as part of the ESF-LSB delivery projects. Where dedicated training was provided to project managers, this was funded by the organisation that employed them.}

Figure 4.6: Role of the project manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of the project manager</th>
<th>% rating agreement with project manager statements as 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% rating agreement with project manager statements as 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kept partners committed to the project</td>
<td>(2015) 4% Disagree</td>
<td>(2013) 2% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages the project to consider new ideas</td>
<td>(2015) 9% Disagree</td>
<td>(2013) 3% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has dealt with any problems that have arisen between the project and Welsh Government</td>
<td>(2015) 6% Disagree</td>
<td>(2013) 2% Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the influence to get things done</td>
<td>(2015) 10% Disagree</td>
<td>(2013) 9% Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Denotes significant difference between waves Base: All ESF-LSB projects: 2015 (82); 2013 (125).
Figure 4.7: Role of the project manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helped the project overcome internal conflict</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped the project to manage external issues that may have affected the way partners work together</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received appropriate training</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behaviour

4.22 All participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements concerning the behaviour and inner workings of their project or partnerships (using a scale of one to seven, where one represented “strongly disagree” and seven “strongly agree”). Figures 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 display the proportion of participants who gave a score of ‘six or seven’ or ‘one or two’ in regards to agreement with each of the statements.

4.23 Within both the baseline and follow-up survey, those involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects displayed the highest levels of strong agreement with the statement ‘the partnership had/has a clear vision and shared values’ (61% in 2013 and 55% in 2015 rating as six or seven out of seven – as shown in Figure 4.8).

4.24 Overall, responses in the follow-up survey were broadly similar to those from 2013. In regards to strong agreement, only one significant difference was evident; ESF-LSB delivery projects were more likely than other partnerships to strongly agree that there were high levels of trust between members (51% for ESF-LSB delivery projects compared with 38% for other projects/partnerships – as shown in Figure 4.8). ESF-LSB delivery projects were more likely than other partnerships to strongly disagree that the partnership took a long time to get anything done (30% rating as one or two out of
seven compared with 16%) and that there was a high rate of turnover of individuals in the partnership (46% compared with 25% - shown in Figure 4.10).

4.25 ESF-LSB delivery projects were seen as being more stable, quicker to take action and to be built on greater levels of trust between members, than other partnerships.

Figure 4.8: Nature of partnership working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Partnership Working</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The partnership had / has clear vision and shared values</strong></td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7 for agreement</td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7 for agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The partnership depends / depended on the quality of personal relationships</strong></td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The partnership had / has strong leadership</strong></td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>There were / are high levels of trust between members</strong></td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

Figure 4.9: Nature of partnership working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Partnership Working</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>There were / are good communications between partners</strong></td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7 for agreement</td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7 for agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A small number of key players make / made most of the decisions</strong></td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The partnership regularly reaches / reached agreements informally</strong></td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Members of the partnership were / are good at challenging each other</strong></td>
<td>(2015)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

Denotes significant difference between waves
4.26 Improvements in collaboration and integration were a key aim of the ESF-LSB Project overall. Participants were asked a number of statements about the level of integration of the members of their projects and partnerships on a scale of one to seven, where one represented “not at all” and seven “to a great extent”. The results for each statement are shown in Figures 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13.

4.27 The statement with the highest score for both ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships was for sharing information with each other (rated as six or seven out of seven by 62% of ESF-LSB delivery projects and 43% of other partnerships). While this is encouraging, arguably the sharing of information is more a starting point for collaboration rather than true ‘integration’.

4.28 In the follow-up survey in 2015, a number of differences were apparent between the reported integration of ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships with the level of integration amongst ESF-LSB delivery projects higher than that amongst other partnerships. ESF-LSB delivery projects were significantly more likely than other partnerships to give higher ratings for ‘made joint use of building/office space/equipment (43% compared with 29% - as shown in Figure 4.11), ‘had plans to ensure the integration was sustained beyond the life of the formal partnership’ (32% compared with 15% - as shown in Figure 4.12), ‘sharing staff (32% compared with
13% - as shown in Figure 4.12) and ‘have integrated their IT systems (7% compared with 2% - as shown in Figure 4.13).

4.29 From 2013 to 2015, there was a significant increase in the proportion of ESF-LSB delivery projects rating integration highly for ‘sharing staff’ (19% compared with 2% - as shown in Figure 4.12) This increase, although significant, was from a low starting point (of just 19%).

4.30 ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships were struggling with the real integration of their systems and processes and, as shown in Figure 4.13, they score much lower for the integration of their IT systems and having shared accountability mechanisms. These issues were discussed in more detail within the literature review and evaluation framework in the formative report 17.

Figure 4.11: Level and type of integration

![Figure 4.11: Level and type of integration](image)

* Denotes significant difference within wave

http://business.cardiff.ac.uk/sites/default/files/esf-lsb_report_final_0.pdf

17
**Figure 4.12: Level and type of integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have / had support of their own organisations in achieving the level of integration required</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question not asked in 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have / had agreed joint strategies to address issues</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Share(d) staff                                                                                  |       | 16%                                   | 34%                                   |
|                                                                                                 |       | 13%                                   | 24%                                   |
|                                                                                                 |       | 20%                                   | 37%                                   |
|                                                                                                 | (2013)| 26%                                   | 19%                                   |
|                                                                                                 |       | 27%                                   | 17%                                   |
|                                                                                                 |       |                                       |                                       |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have / had to ensure the integration will be / was sustained beyond the life of the formal partnership</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

**Figure 4.13: Level and type of integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Represent(ed) autonomous organisations with separate objectives</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have / had developed new processes / structures to combine services or operations</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have / had shared accountability mechanisms</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have integrated their IT systems</th>
<th>(2015)</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7</th>
<th>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

Denotes significant difference between waves

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)
2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)
ESF Delivery Project Support

4.31 The survey gathered views from participants on the level of support received from their Local Service Board and the Welsh Government ESF-LSB national team. It is felt that the level of support offered by both is likely to impact upon the success of the project as a whole.

Support from local and national teams

4.32 Over half of participants involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed (a score of six or seven out of seven) that their Local Service Board has been supportive of the project (55%), compared with just 1% who strongly disagreed (a score of one or two out of seven). In addition to the half who agreed strongly, a further 13% gave a weaker agreement score of five out of seven. A fifth (20%) of ESF-LSB delivery projects responded ‘don’t know’ when asked for their agreement with this statement. As the ESF-LSB delivery projects were focused on key priority areas of the LSB, we would have expected much higher levels of perceived support.

4.33 Excluding the responses given by the WLGA Regional Partnership Board projects to this statement, slightly boosts the proportion agreeing that their Local Service Board has been supportive of the project (65% gave a score of six or seven out of seven in 2015 and 62% in 2013).

4.34 Participants were also asked to rate the extent to which they agreed that the project had received support from the ESF-LSB national team in Welsh Government. The proportions of participants that strongly agreed (score of six or seven out of seven) or strongly disagreed (score of one or two) with each aspect of the support received are shown in Figure 4.14.

4.35 In the 2015 survey, agreement was highest regarding project support from the ESF-LSB national team in ‘monitoring the performance of the project very closely’ with just over half strongly agreeing (54%) compared with only 4% strongly disagreeing. There has been a significant increase from the baseline survey in the proportion strongly agreeing with this statement (40% in 2013 to 54% in 2015). This increase is to be expected given that the projects were coming to an end and they had to report their performance to the Welsh Government who in turn had to report to WEFO.

4.36 As was found in the baseline survey, levels of positive opinions on issues of practical support were slightly lower. Only a third strongly agreed that the national team were
good at disseminating good practice (34%)\(^{18}\) or that they helped the project to achieve its WEFO indicators (32%). While around a quarter of participants strongly agreed that they provided advice on how to tackle problems (27%). We expected the follow-up survey to reveal an increase in the proportion of ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreeing that the ESF-LSB national team were supportive in these areas, in particular, in disseminating good practice from the completed projects (although responsibility for this is not the national team’s responsibility alone).

Figure 4.14: Support from LSB and ESF-LSB national team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Local Service Board was very supportive of the project</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ESF-LSB national team…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitored the performance of the project very closely</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a good relationship with the project</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was good at disseminating good practice</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped the project to achieve its WEFO indicators</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided advice on how to tackle practical problems</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Capacity of key members of project**

4.37 Those involved in ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships were asked whether a set of agencies were key members of their project/partnership. This information acts as another indicator of the success of the projects/partnership in achieving joint working.

\(^{18}\) The proportion of ESF-LSB delivery projects based in North Wales strongly agreeing that the national team were good at disseminating good practice was similar to those based outside of North Wales (33% and 34% respectively). The reason for looking at this split is that we would perhaps expect the responses to differ due to the existence of a North Wales network available within six of the North Wales authorities (Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham). The base size for those within North Wales was very low (a base size of 15)
4.38 Figure 4.15 displays the proportion of ESF-LSB delivery project participants within the follow-up survey that strongly agreed (a score of six or seven out of seven) that certain organisations or representatives were a key member in the project and the proportion who reported that each organisation had the capacity to fully engage. The figures on the far right of Figure 4.15 show the proportion of those who said each organisation had the capacity to fully engage who were involved as key members of the project.

4.39 Since the baseline survey there has been a decline in the proportion of ESF-LSB delivery projects participants indicating that local authorities (from 90% to 80%), other public sector organisations (from 67% to 50%) and voluntary/third sector organisations (from 53% to 39%) were key members of their project. This perhaps gives some indication that, over time, the size of the teams responsible for driving the projects shrunk a little.

4.40 As displayed in Figure 4.15, local authorities were generally seen as key project members and tended to be viewed as having the capacity to fully engage. Other types of organisation (including the voluntary sector) were less likely to be seen as key members and, even where they were key members, they were less likely to be considered to have capacity to engage fully.

Figure 4.15: Key members of the project
Impact of funding for ESF-LSB delivery projects

Impact of funding

4.41 Participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects were shown a series of statements regarding the potential impact of the ESF-LSB funding. The results in Figure 4.16 shows the extent to which funding has enabled partners to ‘Produce outcomes sooner than would have otherwise been possible’ was rated highest with over half (54%) reporting this was enabled to a great extent (a rating of six or seven out of seven).

4.42 There has been a significant increase in the proportion of participants agreeing that the funding had enabled partners to promote equality (from 22% in 2013 to 35% in 2015). This might reflect changes in the activities of the project over time and that greater emphasis has been placed on this cross-cutting issue in communication between the Welsh Government and delivery projects. It might also be driven by greater emphasis being placed on the cross-cutting themes in the 2014 monitoring visits to ESF-LSB delivery projects than in 2013, but the perceptions on the impact on environmental sustainability remain low.

Figure 4.16: Extent to which ESF funding has enabled partners to add value

4.43 Combining responses given across similar statements allows analysis of the extent to which ESF funding has enabled partners to ‘produce outcomes’, ‘collaborate’ or tackle ‘cross-cutting’ issues (as shown in Figure 4.17). Three-fifths of ESF-LSB delivery
projects strongly agreed that the ESF funding had enabled partners to ‘produce outcomes’ or ‘collaborate’ (61% and 59% respectively). Two-fifths (43%) of ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed that the ESF funding had enabled partners to tackle ‘cross-cutting’ issues. The ESF funding was felt to be weakest in enabling ESF-LSB delivery projects to perform against the key aims of promoting the cross-cutting themes of equality and environmental sustainability. The ESF funding was felt to have been relatively successful in enabling the ESF-LSB delivery projects to make improvements in collaborative capacity.

Figure 4.17: Extent to which ESF funding has enabled partners to add value

Progress of projects/partnerships against goals

4.44 As a means of measuring success, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the project had been successful at meeting its goals. Figures 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 shows the proportion of ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships that strongly agreed (a score of six or seven out of seven) or strongly disagreed (a score of one or two out of seven) with each of the statements.

4.45 ESF-LSB delivery projects scored significantly higher than other partnerships for the success of delivering against the goals of ‘shared knowledge’ (66% compared with 46%), ‘bringing together skills and resources of different organisations’ (61% compared with 40%), ‘engaging a wide variety of stakeholders’ (51% compared with 41%), ‘promoting equality’ (65% compared with 40%), and ‘promoting environmental sustainability’ (67% compared with 41%).
35%), ‘finding new solutions to the problems facing the area’ (45% compared with 33%) and ‘delivering more joined-up services’ (44% compared with 31%).

**Figure 4.18: Meeting project or partnership goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7 for agreement</td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7 for agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared knowledge</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>66%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>80%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brought together skills and resources of different organisations</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>61%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>58%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged a wide variety of stakeholders</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>51%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>52%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed strategies for the area</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>50%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>46%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

**Figure 4.19: Meeting project or partnership goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 1 or 2 out of 7 for agreement</td>
<td>% who gave a rating of 6 or 7 out of 7 for agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found new solutions to the problems facing the area</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>45%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>33%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivered more joined-up services</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>44%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackled ‘cross cutting issues’</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>40%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>34%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved outcomes for residents in the area covered by the project / partnership*</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>35%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>32%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

Denotes significant difference between waves

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)
2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)
Figure 4.20: Meeting project or partnership goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project/Partnership record of collaborations</th>
<th>2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)</th>
<th>2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivered better services</td>
<td>ESF-LSB Delivery project: 2015 6% / 2015 39% / 2013 6% / 2013 30%</td>
<td>Other project/partnership: 2015 34% / 2015 57% / 2013 30% / 2013 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged citizens in decisions about service provision</td>
<td>ESF-LSB Delivery project: 2015 21% / 2015 11%</td>
<td>Other project/partnership: 2015 21% / 2015 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secured external funding from government</td>
<td>ESF-LSB Delivery project: 2015 26% / 2015 11%</td>
<td>Other project/partnership: 2015 26% / 2015 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced costs of service provision</td>
<td>ESF-LSB Delivery project: 2015 24% / 2013 14%</td>
<td>Other project/partnership: 2015 20% / 2013 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased the voluntary/third sector’s role in planning and design</td>
<td>ESF-LSB Delivery project: 2015 20% / 2013 13%</td>
<td>Other project/partnership: 2015 20% / 2013 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased the voluntary/third sector’s role in service delivery</td>
<td>ESF-LSB Delivery project: 2015 16% / 2013 11%</td>
<td>Other project/partnership: 2015 16% / 2013 11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave
Denotes significant difference between waves

4.46 Participants were asked to rate the project/partnerships’ record of sharing resources, funding and finding solutions to benefit the local area. Figure 4.21 shows the proportion of participants that strongly agreed (a score of six or seven out of seven) or strongly disagreed (a score of one or two out of seven) with each statement.

4.47 In 2015, ESF-LSB delivery projects produced significantly higher levels of agreement than other partnerships for sharing resources (52% compared with 21%), finding new solutions to the problems facing the area (52% compared with 34%) and pooling funding (29% compared with 16%). This adds further evidence to suggest that respondents perceive that ESF-LSB delivery projects are on the whole more joined-up and collaborative than other partnerships. The findings here probably reflect the stronger mandate for sharing resources, funding and finding solutions to benefit the ESF-LSB delivery projects as they received a grant and the resources were dedicated.

4.48 The only significant difference between the two surveys has been an increase in the proportion of ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreeing that the project had a good record of pooling funding (17% rated as a six or seven out of seven in 2013 compared with 29% in 2015).
Figure 4.21: Project/partnership record for sharing resources, funding and finding solutions to benefit the local area

Delivery success against project priorities

4.49 In order to measure success against some of the key aims of the overall ESF project, responses have been grouped into four broad categories:

- **Integration** (including: ‘shared knowledge’, ‘brought together the skills and resources of different organisations’ and ‘secured external funding from government’).
- **Improvements in collaborative capacity/organisational change** (including: ‘delivered more joined-up services’, ‘tackled ‘cross-cutting’ issues’, ‘found new solutions to the problems facing the area’, ‘engaged citizens in decisions about service provision’ and ‘engaged a wide variety of stakeholders’).
- **Public service improvements** (including: ‘improved outcomes for residents in the area covered by the project’, reduced costs of service provision’ and ‘delivered better services’).
- **Increased voluntary/third sector improvement** (including: ‘increased the voluntary/third sector’s role in the planning and design of services’ and ‘increased the voluntary/third sector’s role in service delivery’).
4.50 The majority of ESF-LSB delivery projects who identified ‘integration’ or ‘improvements in collaborative capacity/organisational change’ as project priorities, felt they had been successful in delivering against at least one element of these (86% and 81% respectively). Seven in 10 who identified ‘public service improvements’ as a project priority felt they had been successful in delivery against at least one element of this (68%). ESF-LSB delivery projects were least likely to believe they had been successful in delivering against a focus of ‘increased voluntary/third sector improvement’ (42% of those who identified this as a priority reported they were successful in delivery). Those involved in ESF-LSB delivery projects were more likely than those involved in other partnerships to report being successful in delivering against at least one element of ‘improvements in collaborative capacity/organisational change’ (81% compared with 65%) and ‘public service improvements’ (68% compared with 49%).

4.51 At an overall level, ESF-LSB delivery projects were more likely than other partnerships to report being successful in delivering against some or all of the elements identified as major priorities of their projects. Focusing on the projects/partnerships who report a major focus (i.e. those who identified at least one element that was a major focus – a score of one of two out of seven), 88% of ESF-LSB delivery projects were felt by participants to have been successful in delivering against some or all of their major priorities in comparison to 68% of other partnerships.

**Figure 4.22: Reported delivery success against project priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery Projects (%)</th>
<th>Other Partnerships (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements in collaborative capacity/organisational change</td>
<td>81%*</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service improvements</td>
<td>68%*</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased voluntary/third sector improvements</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

Base: ESF-LSB Delivery project and other partnerships that were successful in delivering against these at least one element of project focus

88% of ESF-LSB delivery projects who reported a major focus were successful in delivering against some or all of their major foci in comparison to 68% of other partnerships
Project learning and change

4.52 Increasing learning and the sharing of knowledge and best practice across public services was another key aim of the overarching ESF-LSB project. Participants answering about ESF-LSB delivery projects were asked to rate organisations that contributed most to this learning.

Organisations that have enabled or inhibited learning and change

4.53 Figure 4.24 shows that local authorities were seen by participants involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects as the organisations that had the greatest impact in enabling learning and change. Just over three-fifths (62%) of participants rated the extent to which local authorities had enabled learning and change as a six or seven out of seven.

4.54 The majority of participants either remained neutral or did not know whether each type of organisation had enabled/inhibited learning and change in the delivery of their project. This is a concern as these organisations have some responsibility for sharing the learning of the ESF-LSB delivery projects.

Figure 4.23: Support for learning and change in delivery projects
**Factors that have contributed to learning and change**

4.55 Participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects were also asked to consider factors contributing to learning and change in the delivery project. Figure 4.23 shows the proportion that believed each prompted factor had contributed in some way to learning and change in the delivery project.

4.56 As in 2013, ‘examples of good practice’ ranked the highest factor that had contributed to learning and change as reported by three-quarters (74%) of participants. This was followed by ‘managerial leadership’ as reported by almost two-thirds (63%) of participants (up significantly from 48% in 2013). Just over three-fifths (61%) of participants cited ‘evidence based data’ and ‘evaluation’ as factors that contributed to learning (with the proportion of participants reporting the latter as a factor increasing significantly from 46% in 2013). Nearly all ESF-LSB delivery projects experienced some sort of evaluation at the end of the project. These evaluations were either conducted internally or procured through an external research organisation.

4.57 As Figure 4.24 illustrates, participants felt that numerous factors contributed to learning and change in the delivery project. Indeed, only 4% of participants felt that none of the prompted factors had contributed to learning and change in their project.

**Figure 4.24: Factors contributing to learning and change in delivery projects**

![Graph showing factors contributing to learning and change](image)
4.58 As in 2013, the main barrier to learning and change in the delivery project reported by participants involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects was different organisational cultures, reported by 61% of participants. One in eight participants did not feel that there were any barriers to learning and change in the delivery project (12%).

**Figure 4.25: Barriers to learning and change in delivery projects**

- Different organisational cultures: 61% in 2015, 58% in 2013
- Lack of time: 48% in 2015, 45% in 2013
- Not knowing where to find the information*: 26% in 2015, 23% in 2013
- Different professions involved: 20% in 2015, 18% in 2013
- Lack of knowledge sharing: 20% in 2015, 18% in 2013
- Lack of information about what to share*: 12% in 2015, 18% in 2013
- Information on other projects not relevant to ours*: 4% in 2015, 5% in 2013
- Lack of funding*: 2% in 2015, 4% in 2013
- Lack of leadership*: 2% in 2015, 4% in 2013

*Question not asked in 2013 ~Spontaneous response

**Learning and change through collaborations**

4.59 In 2015, participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects were asked an open question about what they had learnt about achieving outcomes through collaboration during their involvement with the project. (see Figure 4.26.)

4.60 Some examples of the responses given are shown below:

- ‘Continuous communication and sharing of good practice is essential’.
- ‘The importance of good leadership and clear vision’.
- ‘It is difficult but provided there is clarity of the outcomes for the client and all parties are committed to this it is achievable’.

---

19 The ‘spontaneous response’ shown within Figure 4.27 refers to answers given to the question that were not shown/provided as an answer option.
‘It can be difficult to work in partnership due to different cultures and different priorities. Takes time for changes to be agreed and implemented.’

Figure 4.26: Lessons learnt about achieving outcomes through collaboration

4.61 Participants who had detailed what they had learnt about achieving outcomes through collaboration were asked to what extent this learning could be useful to partnerships/projects and Welsh Government. Figure 4.27 shows the proportion that thought learning through collaboration could be very useful (those who gave a score of six or seven out of seven) or not useful at all (those who gave a score of one or two out of seven).
4.62 All participants were asked what methods would be best for sharing lessons learnt on collaborative projects in the future. The preferred methods of sharing learning from collaboration in the future are shown in Figure 4.30. ESF-LSB delivery projects were significantly less likely than those answering about other partnerships to agree that an email newsletter or summary is their preferred method of sharing.
4.63 Participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects were also asked which aspects of the projects would be suitable for rolling out more widely in the Welsh public services. Participants were asked whether these aspects could be rolled-out as they stood or with modifications. Their responses are illustrated in Figure 4.29 which shows the score for each along with the combined score (i.e. the combined proportion of those who ‘yes – as it stands’ and ‘yes – with modifications’).

4.64 Participants were more likely to think that each aspect of the project needed modifications before being rolled-out as opposed to being ready for roll-out as it stood.

---

**Figure 4.28: Preferred methods of sharing learning from collaboration in the future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Sharing Learning</th>
<th>ESF-LSB</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional learning events</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An email newsletter or summary</td>
<td>54%*</td>
<td>72%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions at conferences relevant to your service</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National learning events</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing / networking across and amongst organisations</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated web page detailing case studies / best practice</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face meetings / discussions</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies / best practice</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)

---

20 ESF-LSB delivery projects based in North Wales were slightly more likely to cite regional learning events than those outside of North Wales, although the difference was not significant (81% compared with 73% respectively). The base size for those within North Wales was very low (a base size of 15).
4.65 Figures 4.30, 4.31 and 4.32 show the perceptions on the role played by the Welsh Government in supporting projects/partnerships. Over two-fifths (44%) involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed that ‘The project or partnership had a good relationship with the Welsh Government’ (shown in Figure 4.30), compared to a third (34%) of participants involved in other partnerships.

4.66 Other notable differences between ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships (and between 2015 and 2013) when it comes to the role of the Welsh Government include the following:

- A significantly higher proportion of participants involved with ESF-LSB delivery projects reported that they strongly agreed that ‘The Welsh Government closely managed the project’s/partnership’s performance’ compared with those involved in other partnerships (41% versus 19% respectively shown in Figure 4.30). These differences are perhaps unsurprising given the specific programme management arrangements for the delivery projects.
- Participants involved with other partnerships were more likely, than those involved with ESF-LSB project delivery, to strongly disagree that ‘The Welsh Government worked with the project/partnership(s) to help it find funding’ (31% compared
with 16% respectively). This is to be expected as for ESF-LSB delivery projects this was effectively a grant fund.

- Just under three in 10 (29%) participants involved in ESF-LSB project delivery strongly agreed that ‘The Welsh Government helped the project/partnership(s) to manage its own performance’; a proportion significantly higher than those involved in non-ESF partnerships (11%).

- Just over a third (36%) of participants involved in the delivery of other partnerships strongly agreed that ‘Different Welsh Government policies pulled the project/partnership(s) in different directions’, compared to just one in eight (12%) of those involved in the delivery of ESF-LSB projects. A significantly larger proportion of participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects than those from other partnerships strongly disagreed with this statement. (28% compared with 14% respectively).

**Figure 4.30: Role of the Welsh Government**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ESF-LSB Delivery project</th>
<th>Other project/partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government required the project / partnership to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undertake specific activities or achieve specific goals</td>
<td>10% (2015)</td>
<td>39% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9% (2015)</td>
<td>41% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Government funding influenced the project’s /</td>
<td>10% (2015)</td>
<td>41% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partnerships priorities / actions</td>
<td>10% (2015)</td>
<td>45% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The partnership / project had a good relationship with the</td>
<td>3% (2015)</td>
<td>44% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1% (2015)</td>
<td>49% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government closely managed the project’s /</td>
<td>10% (2015)</td>
<td>41% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partnership’s performance</td>
<td>13% (2015)</td>
<td>41% (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32% (2015)</td>
<td>33% (2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave
Denotes significant difference between waves

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)
2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)
Figure 4.31: Role of the Welsh Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Government staff gave the project / partnership(s) useful advice / expertise</td>
<td>72% (ESF) 33% (Other)</td>
<td>13% (ESF) 24% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh government provided informal encouragement to members of the project / partnership to work together</td>
<td>11% (ESF) 33% (Other)</td>
<td>12% (ESF) 29% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government provided the project / partnership(s) with specific and / or ring fenced grants</td>
<td>13% (ESF) 33% (Other)</td>
<td>14% (ESF) 20% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government provided specific guidance to the project / partnership(s)</td>
<td>13% (ESF) 33% (Other)</td>
<td>21% (ESF) 31% (Other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave
Denotes significant difference between waves

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)
2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)

Figure 4.32: Role of the Welsh Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government helped the project / partnership(s) to manage its own performance</td>
<td>10% (ESF) 29% (Other)</td>
<td>25% (ESF) 11% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government helped the project / partnership(s) to tackle practical problems</td>
<td>15% (ESF) 23% (Other)</td>
<td>10% (ESF) 22% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welsh Government worked with the project / partnership(s) to help it find funding</td>
<td>16% (ESF) 16% (Other)</td>
<td>31% (ESF) 17% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Welsh Government policies pulled the project / partnership(s) in different directions</td>
<td>28% (ESF) 12% (Other)</td>
<td>14% (ESF) 36% (Other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20% (ESF) 19% (Other)</td>
<td>11% (ESF) 40% (Other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes significant difference within wave
Denotes significant difference between waves

2015 Base: All respondents (312); ESF-LSB Delivery project (82); Other project/partnerships (230)
2013 Base: All respondents (355); ESF-LSB Delivery project (125); Other project/partnerships (230)
Summary

4.67 The survey results have enabled us to explore how the ESF-LSB delivery projects have changed over a two-year period and how they compare with ‘other partnerships’. As in the baseline survey, comparing the key priorities of ESF-LSB delivery projects with the other partnerships, revealed a number of differences. In 2015, the proportions identifying each of the different aims as a ‘major focus’ (such as ‘delivering more joined-up services’, ‘bringing together the skills and resources of different organisations’ and ‘delivering better services’) were similar for ESF-LSB delivery projects and other partnerships. There were a number of aims that ESF-LSB delivery projects were significantly more likely than other partnerships to respond were ‘not a focus at all’. As was true in the baseline survey, relatively few delivery projects identified increased citizen engagement, increasing the role of the voluntary/third sector in service delivery or increasing the role of the voluntary/third sector in planning and design despite these being key aims of the ESF project as a whole.

4.68 Overall, project managers were rated as performing their role effectively, particularly on keeping partners committed to the project and encouraging the project to consider new ideas.

4.69 Participants felt that they had learnt a number of lessons about achieving outcomes through collaboration. The lessons most commonly learnt were ‘the importance of shared goals/a clear project plan’ and ‘the importance of regular communication/sharing good practice’.

4.70 In terms of behaviours, there was more trust reported between members in ESF-LSB delivery projects than in other partnerships. There is evidence of a more collaborative model of operation within the ESF-LSB delivery projects than the other partnerships as they show significantly higher levels of agreement that the project had a good record of ‘finding solutions to problems facing the area’, ‘sharing resources’ or ‘pooling funding’.

4.71 The level of integration amongst ESF-LSB delivery projects appeared higher than that amongst other partnerships, with ESF-LSB delivery projects scoring higher for a number of the integration statements. The highest level of agreement was with sharing information. But this is only a first step to integration and ratings were lower for the other aspects of integration such as developing new processes to combine services or operations or introducing shared accountability mechanisms.

4.72 Local authorities and other public sector organisations were viewed as key project members; they were also generally thought to have had the time to engage fully with the project. Third sector organisations, community representatives and private sector
organisations were less likely to be felt to have had the capacity to engage fully or to be considered key project members. This is despite the fact that one of the key aims of the ESF funding was to increase collaboration with the third sector.

4.73 The main barriers to **learning and change** in the projects were the differing organisational cultures (61%), followed by lack of time (48%) and not knowing where to find the information (26%). The factors that contribute most to learning and change were sharing examples of good practice (74%), managerial leadership (63%), evidence-based data (61%) and evaluation (61%).

4.74 Only a third of ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed that the ESF-LSB national team was good at disseminating good practice (34%). The fact that the projects have now finished highlights a missed opportunity by the Welsh Government (and the projects themselves) to disseminate the learning. In addition to this, the ESF-LSB delivery projects responded that the majority of the organisations asked about (i.e. Welsh Government, Local Service Board, Regional Partnership Board, voluntary/third sector or Welsh Local Government Association) were not active in enabling learning and change. This is a concern as these organisations should also be responsible for sharing the learning of the ESF-LSB delivery projects.

4.75 In regards to increasing collaborative capacity and achieving outcomes, ESF-LSB delivery projects scored more positively than other partnerships for success in ‘sharing knowledge’, ‘bringing together the skills and resources of different organisations’, ‘engaging a wide variety of stakeholders’, ‘finding new solutions to the problems facing the area’ and ‘delivering more joined-up services’. ESF-LSB delivery projects were perceived as being more likely than other partnerships to be successful in delivering against some or all of the elements identified as being major priorities for their projects. ESF-LSB delivery projects were regarded as being more successful in delivery on issues around ‘integration’ and ‘improvements in collaborative capacity/organisational change’ than ‘increased voluntary/third sector improvement’.

4.76 The ESF-LSB delivery projects were most likely to have been successful in the areas of collaboration and integration. However, the ESF-LSB delivery projects performed worst in delivering against increased voluntary/third sector improvement so better integration of the third sector was not achieved by the majority of the delivery projects. More efficient and effective models of service delivery and better use of resources is apparent for some of the ESF-LSB delivery projects, as around half were successful in delivering against at least one element of public service improvements.

4.77 Generally, ESF-LSB delivery projects seemed to have lacked the **support** they desired. Just over half of participants from ESF-LSB delivery projects strongly agreed
that their Local Service Board had been supportive of the project. As the projects were focused on key priority areas of the LSB, we expected the level of agreement regarding the support received to have been higher.

4.78 In terms of **sustainability**, nearly seven in 10 (68%) ESF-LSB delivery project participants reported that at least some elements of the project had continued; 16% responded that the project had continued as it was and 52% reported that elements of the project had continued. Participants were most likely to agree that funding had enabled partners to achieve outcomes sooner than would have been possible without funding, to have achieved outcomes that would not have been possible at all without funding (additionality) and to improve trust and understanding between partners in delivering together (around half of respondents agreed strongly with each of these achievements). These figures reflect the views of 82 ESF-LSB delivery project participants covering 32 different projects.
5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 This chapter brings together the main findings and conclusions from the summative evaluation of the ESF-LSB Project. It also highlights our recommendations for Welsh Government, local authorities and their partners for improving public services through collaboration in the future.

5.2 The summative evaluation aimed to assess four main issues:

- whether and how the ESF-LSB Project has led to better public services and outcomes for citizens;
- how the ways in which the Project has been implemented and managed have contributed to these outcomes;
- whether and how the Project is communicating and disseminating learning from the delivery projects, nationally and locally; and
- how the Project has improved the integration of the third sector and LSBs; whether this has led to better services and outcomes, and if this progress is sustainable.

5.3 We have structured our conclusions and recommendations according to these four issues. The recommendations are both for specific programmes and projects funded by or through Welsh Government in the future and to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative working more generally. These build upon the recommendations we made in the Final Formative Report which the Welsh Government are starting to address, or have made good progress against in some cases.

Better public services and outcomes for citizens

5.4 We concluded in the Final Formative Report that only a small minority of projects have shown tangible evidence of better public services and outcomes for citizens. Further evidence has emerged since the closure of projects that while processes have been put in place and outputs delivered, overall it is still difficult to assess outcomes for service users.

5.5 Our analysis in Chapter 2 showed that projects had been successful in delivering their WEFO targets across all four indicators, and in particular have conducted a much larger number of dissemination initiatives than expected. There are definitional issues though as presentations to the LSB and to partners are counted as initiatives, when the expectation in the proposal was for best practice to be shared on both a thematic
and geographical basis. More could have been done here to share good practice across projects.

5.6 Evidence from the 2015 all-Wales Public Service Survey suggests that just over half of respondents (54%) strongly agreed that the funding has enabled partners to ‘Produce outcomes sooner than would have otherwise been possible’. A similar proportion (52%) felt that the funding had enabled partners to ‘Produce outcomes that would not have been possible without it’.

5.7 Respondents from ESF-LSB delivery projects were more likely to agree that they had delivered against their goals than their counterparts from other partnerships. Many of these goals, however, were processes (sharing knowledge, engaging a wide variety of stakeholders etc.), rather than outcomes. Only a third (34%) of respondents strongly agreed that their project had ‘delivered better services’ (compared to 30% in other partnerships) and this fell from 43% in the first wave of the survey.

5.8 As the WEFO indicators cannot be relied upon to assess the performance of a project and the survey respondents have a vested interest in the project, this means there is a greater reliance upon local monitoring and evaluation by projects to measure outcomes.

5.9 The Welsh Government tried to get projects to develop local theory-based frameworks so they understood how activities lead to outputs and to outcomes and the evaluation team presented their own approach to projects in 2013, but the use of such methodologies was inconsistent. Projects should have been encouraged to think about such processes at the application stage and then supported in their use throughout the project. However, this requires sufficient analytical capacity within delivery projects and/or LSBs, whereas both rounds of stakeholder interviews raised concerns about this capacity, which was also raised by projects themselves at the national learning events organised by the evaluation team.

5.10 Our meta-analysis revealed that a large number of projects had difficulty designing and setting outcome measures for service users and/or the wider population. Very few indicators of financial outcomes or efficiencies were set by projects. Even in projects where it was feasible to get user feedback on the impact of changes, there was not enough thought or investment of time in collecting data. The lack of outcome indicators spanning the whole ESF-LSB Project was a significant weakness.

5.11 We have previously raised the difficulty of setting measures for process outcomes (e.g. how do you measure improved co-ordination, leadership, cultural change, increased knowledge exchange, etc.?) While these are difficult to measure quantitatively, more
effort should have been placed on specifying the best available proxy indicators and collecting qualitative evidence of where the project added value on process measures.

5.12 It has been difficult, therefore, for evaluators at both the project and strategic level, to assess the relative 'success' of projects where realistic outcomes and associated measures have not been set. Notwithstanding the fact that evaluators did not have a great deal to work with in some cases, the evaluation reports varied in quality. The evaluations were conducted by a mix of external consultants and internally. Some evaluations weren't based on a local theory-based framework and so did not necessarily link processes to outcomes. Many reports focused on outputs rather than outcomes and only a few collected and analysed feedback from users.

5.13 We highlighted in the formative stage of the evaluation that there are two main factors which make it difficult to detect change in outcomes for citizens: (a) timing - improvements in some outcomes, such as health status, are likely to take some years to achieve; and (b) attribution - it is difficult to isolate the effect of the delivery project from other factors. While the impact of some projects may only be revealed in the future, for the majority of projects, there has been sufficient time to assess impact but inadequate evidence is available to know whether or not it has delivered for service users.

5.14 Our analysis echoes the conclusions of the formative evaluation that it is mainly process outcomes (rather than service/citizen outcomes) that have been delivered. A number of projects were ‘back-office functions’ (e.g. ICT-related projects) rather than citizen-facing services like social care and therefore detecting improved outcomes for users was difficult. For those citizen-facing services, we have shown in Chapter 3 that some projects such as Connecting Families in Bridgend have delivered better outcomes for citizens. But there is little evidence from most projects that improved processes have led to improved outcomes for the public.

5.15 Rather than suggesting that it could take time for outcomes to emerge or that improvements in processes will eventually produce service improvement, our meta-analysis reveals that there were other barriers in play impeding outcomes for citizens. In addition, our interviews with national stakeholders raised concerns about whether the delivery projects had the ability to drive systems change. These interviews also queried whether the necessary senior political and managerial leadership was in place to give a sufficiently high profile and status to the delivery projects and hold them to account for delivering outcomes. Our evidence supports this view in suggesting that there were varied levels of managerial leadership from the LSBs and little political leadership.
5.16 There are a number of recommendations which can be suggested from these conclusions – for Welsh Government in managing such a Project in the future and for those involved in delivering projects.

5.17 Recommendations for Welsh Government:
- Ensure there is a means by which challenge and rigour can be introduced into application assessment processes at a very early stage, e.g. to weigh proposals against the evidence of what works.
- Give greater emphasis to project evaluation in the application process and consider putting funding requirements in place e.g. attach funding to a milestone of designing a robust evaluation framework.
- Support projects in defining aims, setting baseline indicators and outcomes at the start of the process.
- Outline clear criteria in the application process that projects need to show how they could lead to system change.
- Put mechanisms in place whereby projects are required to share outcomes with both the Welsh Government and other projects on an ongoing basis.
- Be realistic that some projects are not set up to directly impact service users and others may fail.
- Consider designing and developing a structured programme to build evaluative and analytical capacity of all LSBs/PSBs to improve their focus on, among other things, setting and demonstrating outcomes, using theories of change and utilising qualitative evidence. We note the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, particularly those around the Assessments of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plans, will go some way to building analytical capacity and introducing analytical rigour into service design and planning.

Recommendations for local authorities and partners:
- Give greater emphasis to designing projects that can be evaluated, ensuring that monitoring data are available and making adequate provision of resources to undertake evaluation. Give greater emphasis to specifying measurable outcomes at the proposal stage and collecting qualitative evidence where there are impacts on service users.
- Ensure that there are clear accountability mechanisms for the performance of the project – either through the scrutiny process or in reporting arrangements to the LSB.
Implementation and management processes

5.18 The second key issue for the evaluation was to assess whether and how the ways in which the Project has been implemented and managed has led to better public services and outcomes for citizens.

5.19 Previous research conducted in Wales (Martin et al. 2013) has shown that there are a number of factors which help to facilitate effective collaboration including funding, leadership, clear governance arrangements, robust accountability and performance management, vision and capacity to engage citizens. The ESF-LSB Project provided funding which enabled partnerships to employ project managers to try and make collaborations deliver.

5.20 The evaluation used a wide range of methods including surveys, case studies, interviews and a meta-analysis to explore the significance of these (and other) factors in enabling collaboration and ultimately delivering outcomes.

5.21 Evidence from the all-Wales Public Service surveys showed that respondents from ESF-LSB delivery projects were more positive than those from other partnerships across a range of collaborative processes such as 'bringing together skills and resources of different organisations', 'finding new solutions to the problems facing the area' and 'delivering more joined-up services'.

5.22 The 2015 survey showed that ESF-LSB delivery projects produced significantly higher levels of agreement than other partnerships on questions measuring levels of financial collaboration, such as sharing resources and pooling funding which bodes well for future public services if budgets continue to be reduced. Overall, respondents perceived that ESF-LSB delivery projects were more joined-up and collaborative than other partnerships.

5.23 While managerial leadership was cited in the survey as being an important factor in enabling learning and change, our case studies and meta-analysis revealed concerns about the lack of strategic leadership in projects. Politicians were largely uninvolved in what was seen as operational projects and LSBs were often only reported to ‘by exception’. We found only a few examples of LSBs having strategic ownership of the project and ensuring that actions were taken when progress was not going to plan, when partners became disengaged or if outcomes were unlikely to be achieved. We also found a wide variation in how LSBs were planning to sustain the project after the ESF resource had ended.

5.24 All the evidence on the role played by project managers is positive. The survey showed that project managers in particular ‘kept partners committed to the project’ and
‘encouraged the project to consider new ideas’ (more than six in 10 strongly agreed). They deployed both generic skills for relationship building (e.g. communication and negotiation skills) as well as project management skills. There is a concern, however, about whether project managers, on their own, had sufficient influence to get things done. A link can be made here with the lack of strategic leadership mentioned above.

5.25 Given the resource invested in the project managers, it seems that insufficient effort has been placed on developing these individuals to their full extent. Only two-fifths of survey respondents agreed that the project manager had received appropriate training and our case studies revealed that project managers are not leading similar collaborative management projects, but have simply returned to their previous positions. It is worth noting that the regional projects, which received WLGA funding in addition to that from ESF, were able to access WLGA training events specifically aimed at enhancing the skills of project managers around collaboration. Unfortunately we don’t know about the extent to which these skills have been retained and used by local authorities and LSBs after the end of the ESF-funded delivery projects.

5.26 The ESF-LSB national team had the potential to play a significant role in facilitating projects to deliver better public services and outcomes for citizens. The survey showed that the team were perceived as being strongest in ‘monitoring the performance of the project’ and weakest in ‘disseminating good practice’, which is an issue we explore further below.

5.27 While the projects had to produce annual reports for the Welsh Government, it wasn’t always clear how the performance of the projects were being held to account. The original intention was that delivery projects would be subject to local scrutiny and be held to account by the LSB. The role of scrutiny was not embedded within delivery projects’ accountability mechanisms and the general scrutiny provided by the LSB was patchy.

5.28 **Recommendations for Welsh Government:**

- Insist that governance and scrutiny procedures for projects are robust in providing leadership and accountability, ‘add value’ and monitor these arrangements against these criteria.
- Ensure that there is ‘ownership’ of each project and/or generic themes from senior Welsh Government officials.
- Require the lead organisation to take responsibility for producing and implementing a 'legacy plan' to sustain progress on outcomes and embed good practice through new ways of working after funding has ended.
5.29 **Recommendations for local authorities and partners:**

- Ensure that there are clear governance and scrutiny arrangements in place so that operational difficulties can be quickly resolved.
- Be clear about which organisations and individuals are meant to be providing leadership and what this entails.
- Ensure that there is a senior responsible officer who has formal ‘ownership’ of the project. Their role would be to drive the project at a strategic level and support the project manager to ensuring that a project meets its objectives.
- Produce a ‘legacy plan’ for the project so that consideration is given to how some (all) of the work may continue in the future.

**Learning from the delivery projects**

5.30 The ESF-LSB Project was expected to generate learning that could help improve mainstream service delivery through collaboration and in turn contribute to better outcomes for citizens.

5.31 The 2015 survey results showed that delivery projects saw local authorities as the organisations that had the greatest impact in enabling learning and change in the delivery of the project. Nearly two-thirds of respondents thought these had positively enabled learning and change compared to around a third who thought the same about the Welsh Government, Local Service Boards or Regional Partnership Boards and the third sector.

5.32 These findings broadly reflect those from the 2013 survey, as do the two factors that were reported as most influencing learning: ‘examples of good practice’ and ‘managerial leadership’. In the 2015 survey, respondents cited ‘evidence-based data’ and ‘evaluation’ as the next most important factors that contributed to learning – a significant increase since 2013. This may result from the fact that nearly all projects have experienced some sort of evaluation at the end of the project, either conducted internally or procured through an external research organisation. It may also reflect the positive feedback about the learning events held as part of the national evaluation.

5.33 Where participants credited networking with other delivery projects as having contributed to learning and change, this was most often through generating ‘greater focus/target of activity’, ‘clearer objectives/outcomes’, partners’ buy-in/ownership’ and ‘achieving outcomes’ – all mentioned by over half the respondents in 2015. When asked about whether they had learnt about achieving outcomes through collaboration, over 80% stated that they had learnt something with the most commonly reported
lessons being about ‘the importance of shared goals/a clear project plan’ (37%), that ‘collaboration in challenging/hard work takes time/effort to develop’ (24%) and ‘the importance of regular communication/sharing good practice’ (21%).

5.34 The survey showed that learning from delivery projects’ experiences of collaboration could be transferable to a range of institutional contexts and locations. Over two-thirds of projects thought that the learning from their project could be very useful to both the Welsh Government - in terms of setting direction and devising policy regarding collaborative working within the sector - and for other local partnerships in the same local authority area or region as well as more widely.

5.35 As in 2013, the main barrier to learning and change reported by the delivery projects was 'different organisational cultures' (61% of respondents), followed by a lack of time (48%). In this context, it is interesting that ‘regional learning events’ was chosen as the preferred way of sharing learning in the future by nearly 80% of respondents. These were facilitated through a member of the ESF-LSB national team in North Wales, although resource constraints prevented them developing in a similar way in South-east and South-west Wales.

5.36 Over half of respondents involved in delivery projects thought that an email newsletter or summary would be among the best methods of sharing lessons learnt from collaborative projects in the future; significantly less than nearly three-quarters of those from other partnerships. A majority of respondents from both types of partnerships were positive about using sessions at conferences relevant to their sectors to disseminate learning on collaboration. These responses raise questions about different understandings of ‘learning’ and ‘dissemination’. While the latter may be an activity designed to share learning about a project, there is no guarantee that participants do learn from other projects in a way that helps them use this knowledge in other contexts.

5.37 Taken together, the findings on learning from the 2015 survey pose the question of who is – or should be – taking responsibility and providing leadership for sharing learning. Findings from the formative report and from the meta-analysis suggest that strong leadership, providing the authority and credibility to engage and galvanise partners, is crucial to facilitate learning within and between local areas and transfer knowledge about collaboration to Welsh Government.

5.38 Without this explicit leadership, the evaluation suggests that much of the learning that takes place about collaboration for achieving outcomes will be mainly within projects or partnerships, through colleagues working together for the first time and ‘picking things
up from each other’ or happening opportunistically between projects. This ad hoc, tacit
learning can happen easily and naturally, but it is fragile as it depends on individuals
and is unlikely to be more widely available to other projects and professionals, and
may not be sustained.

5.39 As found through the meta-analysis, opportunities for more structured learning have
been provided through LSBs and/or delivery projects putting on legacy events to share
the products and outcomes of their projects with partners and individuals across the
public sector. While potentially useful for local or, in some cases regional learning,
there has been little evidence collected about the impact of such events on
participants’ learning and how they might use this.

5.40 While the delivery projects have, in some cases, tested out innovative approaches in
delivering a specific service, it is only in areas where there has been a keen policy
interest (e.g. Team Around the Family) that learning has been systematic and
impactful. Generally, learning from projects has not been disseminated systematically
across Wales (and beyond) by the Welsh Government, WLGA and/or the delivery
projects themselves. We believe that there is a shared responsibility for learning. The
Welsh Government need to give greater emphasis on learning and sharing good
practice within public services, but there is also a responsibility on those receiving
funding to share what they have learnt with others.

5.41 The relatively ad hoc and patchy learning that has taken place to date mean there are
opportunities for the Welsh Government to pro-actively encourage LSBs and local
authorities to learn more from the ESF-LSB Project and related projects. This
leadership and support could assist partnerships in focusing more on outcomes for
service users and in better understanding ‘what works’ in terms of the collaborative
processes that are likely to achieve these.

5.42 **Recommendations for Welsh Government:**

- Put greater emphasis on designing a learning and dissemination programme to
  encourage greater opportunities for learning from EU (and other funded) Projects.
  This should help the public sector to focus on the delivery of agreed and shared
  outcomes for service users and learn about ‘what works’ in achieving these.
- Where evidence suggests that the approach developed by a project or group of
  projects is effective, to actively use this knowledge in future policy design.
- To develop and widen the work to date to disseminate learning about outcomes
  and effective collaborative approaches on specific policy themes.
• To capture and disseminate the learning generated from using ESF funding to employ collaborative project managers as their skills in managing projects spanning multiple organisations and sectors are likely to be highly valued in Welsh public services, where relationship management is becoming increasingly important to take forward collaboration.

5.43 Recommendations for local authorities and partners:
• To take a structured approach to disseminating the outcomes and learning of local delivery projects and agreeing how this should be used to inform legacy plans and future collaboration in other service areas.
• Using the existing online resource (hosted by the WLGA, the Wales Audit Office and others) to share learning and transfer knowledge (including through evidence-based good practice) about how collaboration can improve service delivery and citizen outcomes.

Integration of the third sector and LSBs
5.44 One of the original aims of the ESF-LSB Project nationally was to improve the integration of the third sector with LSBs to contribute towards transforming public services. However, both our surveys revealed that only a quarter of respondents felt that the major focus of their ESF-LSB funded projects was to increase the role of the third sector role in service delivery.

5.45 The 2015 survey found that less than half of delivery projects (46%) strongly agreed that relationships between the public and voluntary/third sector have been good – exactly the same percentage as in 2013. (This compared with a significant increase from 25% in 2013 to 42% in 2015 for ‘other partnerships’.)

5.46 This suggests that neither the ESF-LSB funding nor the Making the Connections funding has been particularly effective in improving LSBs’ relationships with the third sector through collaboration on specific projects. This raises questions about how influential third sector representatives on LSBs are, particularly as the 2015 survey findings showed that only 39% of ESF-LSB funded projects agreed that the third sector was a key member of their partnership (down slightly from 2013), with around half agreeing that the third sector had the capacity to engage in the partnership in both 2013 and 2015.

5.47 The meta-analysis illuminates this point and reinforces findings from the formative report, which suggested that the Project had only led to better involvement and integration of the third sector in the delivery projects that were either third sector-led (such as Third Sector Brokers in West Wales) and/or which relied heavily on the third
sector for delivery (e.g. Swansea Healthy Partnership and RCT Consultation and Engagement).

5.48 Clearly, there is a lower potential for the third sector’s involvement in the projects that are less about citizen outcomes and more about back office improvements and internal change, such as the North Wales Legal Services and ICT Collaboration projects.

5.49 National stakeholders are concerned that the local third sector needs to be fully involved in collaborative service design – as well as delivery - and feel this has not been happening as much as it should have across the Project. In response to these concerns, we asked questions about the nature and effectiveness of the third sector’s role in the ESF-LSB funded partnerships.

5.50 Of the 24% of delivery projects that named ‘increasing the voluntary/third sector’s role in planning and designing of services’ as a major focus, only 30% were likely to be successful in delivering against this aim. Both percentages were significantly lower than for other aspects of collaboration (e.g. of the 55% of projects which had ‘bringing together the skills and resources of different organisations’ as a major focus, 76% were likely to be successful in delivering against this).

5.51 Arguably of greater concern, the survey results showed that for the quarter of ESF-LSB partnerships which reported ‘increasing the third sectors’ role in service delivery’ as a major focus in both 2013 and 2015, the percentage that had successfully delivered against this decreased from 55% to 46% over the two year period).

5.52 The conclusion that there has been little progress and possibly some worsening of the effective involvement of the third sector in LSBs and delivery projects over the ESF funding period is borne out by the Making the Connections evaluation, which concluded that: “As with the delivery of public services, there is relatively little evidence that the design and planning of public services has been improved through better integration of the third sector ………while there would appear to be examples of MtC officers achieving small but significant wins in terms of a more collaborative approach to the development of specific initiatives and projects, there is very little evidence of systemic change” (Old Bell 3, 2015).

5.53 Evidence from our case studies and meta-analysis suggests a number of possible reasons for this. There may be a mind set within some statutory services that does not think of the third sector as having a strategic design and planning role, and only considers involving the sector when it has an obvious part to play in service delivery. Even this may be less likely in the face of austerity and reductions in public sector finances, although some delivery projects, such as Third Sector Brokers and Swansea Healthy Partnership saw the third sector as being important to the sort of
transformational change that was required to address the twin challenges of increasing demand and decreasing resources.

5.54 Some of our case studies and the meta-analysis raised concerns about the capacity of the third sector to engage in local partnerships – and this is borne out by our survey results. Given that Making the Connections was run alongside the ESF-LSB Project to increase third sector capacity to this end, this suggests a need to learn more about the reasons for the lack of progress in third sector integration and involvement to improve public services and to consider more radical approaches to addressing this policy priority.

5.55 **Recommendations for the Welsh Government:**

- Reflect on the findings of the evaluations of the ESF-LSB project and Making the Connections, to produce a plan on how future programmes can be designed to integrate the third sector, not only in the delivery but also in the design and planning of services.

5.56 **For local authorities and partners:**

- To consider how best to involve the third sector as a matter of course in all collaborative working to attempt to improve service delivery and citizen outcomes in line with the recent local government legislation.
- To review the capacity of the local third sector to engage in PSBs and other partnerships and work with CVCs and other partners to plan ways of increasing this capacity if required.

**Learning from the summative stage of the ESF-LSB Project evaluation**

5.57 In addition to the specific recommendations above, we make some overarching recommendations to the Welsh Government and its partners about how to disseminate and use the findings from this summative evaluation.

5.58 The Welsh Government should consider using this evaluation, the evaluation of Regional Collaborative Working, currently underway and other relevant evaluations, such as Making the Connections, to draw out common lessons about effective collaboration that can lead to system change and population outcomes. There is significant potential to bring together learning from across different funding streams, so learning is not conducted in silos.

5.59 In line with its research and evaluation principles, the Welsh Government should agree how it wants to use the findings of this evaluation to help ensure there is a legacy from the Project. There are learning points for Welsh Government at all stages of the
process from supporting projects in designing a robust evaluation framework and setting outcomes measures to improving how learning and good practice from the Project is shared. The responsibility for embedding and acting on these lessons should be shared across Welsh public services.
References


Annex 1. List of ESF-LSB projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/Grant</th>
<th>Brief Description of Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglesey/Gwynedd</td>
<td>Delivering Collaboration Improvement Frameworks - To support service transformation and improve public sector delivery through improved collaboration and joint working between health and social services in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaenau Gwent (and Merthyr Tydfil)</td>
<td>Heads of the Valleys 8-14, Out of School Hours (OHSL) NEET Prevention Programme - To reduce the incidence of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen</td>
<td>Developing Vulnerability Intelligence for Public Services - The overarching aim of this project is to improve the way public service organisations effectively utilise data and information they currently already hold in back office systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgend</td>
<td>Connecting Families - To develop and implement a new model of service to address the needs and behaviours of families who place most demands on public services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgend</td>
<td>Making Connections - A joint Communities First/LSB Communications Initiative - The project has sought to forge new links between Communities First areas and the LSB partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caerphilly</td>
<td>Partnership Development and Collaborative Improvement - To expand and deepen the capacity of public service bodies to facilitate and deliver business process change, in line with Single Integrated Plan requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caerphilly</td>
<td>Personal information sharing - Support personal data sharing across public, private and voluntary sector organisations in the Caerphilly Local Service Board area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caerphilly</td>
<td>Caerphilly Passport Programme - The PASSPORT Programme has been designed specifically to assist LSB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carmarthenshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Advice and Support</strong> - This project will review the effectiveness and efficiency of current provision of citizen advice services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carmarthenshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Carmarthenshire Success</strong> - To oversee the shared delivery of 40 opportunities for employment and training per year in the public and voluntary sector for people aged 16-24, within Carmarthenshire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carmarthenshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environment Partnership</strong> - This project will provide dedicated project management support to the Carmarthenshire Environment Partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>West Wales Third Sector Health and Social Care Brokers</strong> - The aims of this project include enabling the third sector to become an integral part of co-designing each patient pathway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conwy and Denbighshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong> - To increase the sustainability of current Communities First Projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conwy and Denbighshire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Joint Approach to Workforce Development</strong> - To work collaboratively on workforce planning and development across the public sector to pool resources and prepare for the future skill needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denbighshire/Conwy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conwy and Denbighshire Financial Inclusion and Anti-poverty</strong> - To improve the strategic co-ordination and collaboration of financial inclusion services across Conwy and Denbighshire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denbighshire/Conwy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conwy and Denbighshire Progressive Engagement Pathways (PEP)</strong> – To increase collaborative working, smarter commissioning and strategic co-ordination of NEET provision (19 +).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merthyr Tydfil, (Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Torfaen and RCT)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Change Programme</strong> - Transforming the culture and approach to promoting the benefits of work across public services in LSB areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath Port Talbot</td>
<td><strong>Building Capacity and Capability</strong> - To accelerate services transformation to meet the needs of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath Port Talbot</td>
<td><strong>Development and evaluation of an air alert system</strong> - The project aim is to implement and evaluate a system to communicate air quality information to improve self-management of susceptible populations within the Neath Port Talbot area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath Port Talbot</td>
<td><strong>Improvement of Older People’s Services</strong> - The aim of the project will be to map existing services against need to identify and deliver actions that will contribute to improve the quality of life for older people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Partnership Board Central Wales</td>
<td><strong>Extending Public Service Re-design and Reconfiguration in Central Wales within a whole area Programme</strong> - The project will deliver increased project management capacity and capability in application of lean systems methodology jointly for two LSB areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board Central Wales</td>
<td><strong>A Comprehensive Collaborative Regional Waste Programme</strong> - This project seeks dedicated programme management capacity consolidating all activities relating to waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board North Wales</td>
<td><strong>North Wales ICT Collaboration</strong> - This project will scope and deliver the potential for collaborative working in information and Communication Technology across the six North Wales councils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board North Wales</td>
<td><strong>Legal Services Collaboration</strong> - To develop the North Wales Legal Services Collaboration project from a development phase into substantial implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board North Wales</td>
<td><strong>Transform and modernise transport services in North Wales - North Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (Taith)</strong> - The overall aim is to put in place a rationalised and sustainable regional management structure that will allow for a continuous programme of change and improvement for transport services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board North Wales</td>
<td><strong>Collaborative Commissioning of Social Care in South East Wales with a focus on Fostering and Adoption, Extra Care Housing and</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Wales</td>
<td><strong>Telecare/Telehealth</strong> - Implement findings from the feasibility study undertaken by SEWIC to secure substantial gains in efficiency and effectiveness from collaborative working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board South East Wales</td>
<td><strong>Strategic Planning and Highways Service Delivery in South East Wales</strong> - The Project aims to deliver necessary shared corporate support service to enable programmes to be delivered on a collaborative basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board South West Wales</td>
<td><strong>Shared Legal and ICT Services</strong> - Legal Services implementation Phase and ICT Shared Services Feasibility Phase. The objective of both projects is to deliver more efficient and robust services for the participating authorities through closer collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLGA Regional Partnership Board South West Wales</td>
<td><strong>Western Bay Health &amp; Social Care Programme Project</strong> - Support 3 work streams (adult mental health, adult learning disability services and older people) as part of, but not duplicating, the wider Western Bay project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td><strong>Transforming Transport</strong> - Bring together all transport providers within Cwm Taf through the creation of a centralised and fully Integrated Booking and Vehicle Journey Planning System for Health and Social Care transport needs under a Single Commissioning Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td><strong>Consultation and Engagement</strong> - The aim of the project is to provide an effective and efficient approach to consultation and engagement in line with the National Principles for Public Engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td><strong>Cwm Taf Integrating Localities</strong> - Supporting the changes needed in management structures and approaches to ensure future delivery of safe, sustainable, citizen-centred health and social care services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td><strong>Making the Local Connections</strong> - Local services are designed and delivered in ways that reflect citizens’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Project Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>Team Around the Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>Low Carbon Swansea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>Healthy Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torfaen</td>
<td>Powering up Communities First In Torfaen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torfaen</td>
<td>Unified Menu Planning System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>