

School for Public Health Research

Why evaluate? A one-day workshop on research, evidence and evaluation in local government

We live in a society in which it is increasingly important for decisions to be “evidence-based”. Among other things, this implies a need to evaluate new programmes and policies to find out “what works”. Yet it is not always clear why evaluation is needed, what evaluation means, or how to do it well. Moreover, with the move of public health into local government, there is increasing interest in how local government activities can help improve health and reduce health inequalities. However, showing that such activities really do “work” in this way can be difficult.

This is where evaluation, particularly outcome evaluation, can be important, but it is not always clear what evaluation involves, or what can be done with limited resources. This one-day introductory course aims to explore these issues and offer some pointers to local government practitioners on how to think about and evaluate the effects of their activities on public health. The workshop does not require previous knowledge of evaluation issues, or knowledge of study design, or statistics.

The workshop is free, and is being organised as part of the work of the [NIHR School for Public Health Research](#). NIHR SPHR was set up to help improve the evidence base for public health practice. It is a partnership between eight leading UK academic centres with excellence in applied public health research in England.

Audience: Practitioners working in local government - e.g. housing, transport, and planning managers, officers, and technicians, and others using evaluations and research evidence. Places will be offered on a first come-first served basis, with priority being given to non-academics working in local government.

Content: The issues covered in the workshop will include:

- Why use evidence?
- Why evaluate?
- What is a "good" research question?
- How do we measure processes, outputs and outcomes, and why?
- What sorts of data (and evidence) are most useful for answering different types of questions?
- What is "good enough" evidence?
- What sort of evaluation can you do with limited resources?
- What data sources are accessible and useful in local government?
- What makes a good case study?, and
- Where can you get help with evaluation issues?

Participants are encouraged to bring along examples of potential evaluations, or evaluation problems, to use as case studies to discuss on the day.

Location: Tavistock Room, [Woburn House Conference Centre](#), 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HQ

Date & time: Wednesday 2nd April 2014, 9:00-5.00pm

Registration: To register, please fill out the [registration form](#); or for further information, please email sphr@lshtm.ac.uk