

Guidance

Developing a Budget for an Intervention or Programme Undergoing a Randomised Control Trial (RCT): Programmes perspective



As each intervention or programme is different it would not be appropriate to provide a set budget that all interventions had to align to when delivering in the context of an RCT. However, there are a number of key questions teams delivering interventions or programmes should consider. Below we have posed several questions for consideration by the team when developing a budget for a programme undergoing an RCT. It is especially important when developing a budget that rationale for costs is given so that on review it is clear to YEF what costs have been accounted for and why.

We suggest that this is an exercise that, in part, should be carried out with your independent evaluator. Note these questions primarily focus on the budget from an intervention or programme perspective and not the evaluators budget which is separate to this exercise.

Intervention activities

Staff Structure

- 1 How many practitioners do you need to deliver your intervention?
 - a. What's the caseload you expect / ratio of practitioner to participants?
 - b. Take into account dosage of delivery and any wraparound time for administrative work or work required outside of direct delivery i.e., do practitioners prepare for sessions with participants and on average how long should this take? Do practitioners write up notes or log information on systems, if so, how long does this take?
 - c. Have you taken into account a level of resilience you will need with your staff when thinking about sickness or staff turnover?
 - d. Are practitioners already in post or do you need to recruit new practitioners? Do you need to back fill existing practitioners from delivering business as usual? If recruitment is needed, have you accounted for senior staff time drafting adverts, reviewing applications and interviewing, alongside the costs of advertising/promoting?
- 2 What does practitioner management and supervision require?
 - a. What's the ratio of managers to practitioners?
 - b. Are there enough managers? Do you need to recruit new managers or back fill existing managers?

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- c. How long per week or month do managers spend supporting practitioners? What's the frequency and duration?
- d. Do practitioners receive supervision or additional support outside of management? If so, how frequent are these sessions and what's the duration? Do you have enough people to offer supervision or support? Do you need to recruit more or back fill existing staff?

3 Do staff need to be trained to deliver the intervention or programme?

- a. When does training take place? How long is the training? Do staff need to travel to the training? How many days out of work are staff and do they need their time back filled?
- b. How much does the training cost?
- c. Do you need to pay for the venue? The tutor? Travel? Resources?
- d. Do staff have to undergo regular CPD? If so, what does this look like how much does this cost? Do staff have to travel? Do you have to pay venue costs?

4 Do you have access to the right staff to support specific needs relating to equity, diversity and inclusion?

- a. Might you need a translator or someone who is multilingual? Or someone who uses British Sign-Language, or who has the knowledge and experience to work with participants who are neuro-diverse? How much will this cost?
- b. Might you need a Speech and Language Therapist? Or support for participants that struggle with comprehension of written word, or those who struggle to read? How much will this cost?
- c. Do you have expertise to ensure staff can deliver in a racially equitable and culturally sensitive way? Might they need training and support? What does this look like? How much will it cost?

Intervention

5 Do you need a license to deliver the intervention or programme? Or request permission from the developers?

- a. How much is the license?
- b. How often do you need to renew it? Is it time limited? Do you have to sign-up to on-going training or other on-going elements required for the license / by the developers?
- c. What does it cover you to deliver, and what doesn't it cover you to deliver? Does it only cover a certain number of staff and you have to increase costs as your staff numbers increase?
- d. Do you need to pay for resources? How many do you need? When do you need them by? How are they delivered i.e., paper based, tablet, computer etc and therefore do you need to consider any additional cost?

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Think about whether you already have resources/session plans and whether these need to be developed (you may want to pay to have these look professional and ensure that they are accessible and engaging for young people) or whether they need to be created from scratch.

- e. Do they need to be translated into different languages? Have you checked whether they can be translated into different languages? What's the cost of this?
- f. Are there additional accessibility questions you need to explore at this stage for participants? If so, what does this look like and what are the indicative costs?

Partner organisations

6 Are you working with partner organisations?

- a. What's their role?
- b. What resource, staff or equipment requirements are needed for them to fulfil their role?
- c. What are their training needs and requirements?

Engagement and outreach

7 Do you need to develop an engagement plan or create resources in order to recruit the right cohort of participants?

8 Do you need to hire a space to hold recruitment/engagement events? How much staff time will be needed to run the events?

Travel, subsistence and emergency costs

9 Do staff need to travel? If so, roughly how often and for how long? What would you expect costs to look like?

10 Do participants need to travel? How do they do this? Do they get picked up by minibuses or taxis? Do they get the bus or train? Who pays for their transport and how much does it cost?

11 If your programme participants are families/parents/carers, do you need to consider budgeting for potential childcare costs in order to remove any financial barriers to engagement?

12 Do participants get any other support such as food or emergency costs i.e., if a participant needs to find emergency accommodation? How much should you budget for this?

Note: YEF understand that when working with the cohort of young people we wish to support, who are often the most vulnerable, that there will be circumstances where emergency costs are needed and therefore suggest that projects use their judgement to account for this in their budget.

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Evaluation activities

Staff Training

- 13** Staff will need to be trained by the evaluator to understand how to deliver the project in the context of the evaluation, this includes understanding the principles of running a randomised control trial, how to support participant recruitment to the evaluation, understanding the processes of gaining participant consent and collecting baseline and outcome data. We expect the project team to work with the evaluator to develop a flow diagram that outlines how randomisation could be incorporated into existing referral processes.
- How long are these sessions for?
 - How much time are staff required to spend being trained? Does staff time need to be back filled?
 - Do staff need more than one training session? Do they need support sessions or regular clinics to troubleshoot in Realtime?
 - Are there wider awareness raising activities that need to happen? i.e., are key decisions makers across LAs on board with the evaluation? Do you need regular awareness raising and support sessions for them too? If so, how often and when?
 - Do you need facilities? Do you need written staff bulletins or other means of keeping in regular contact to keep everyone up to speed and aware of upcoming tasks?
 - Do you need to develop a handbook that explains how to deliver the project in the context of the evaluation? This is likely to be something your evaluator will lead on but speak with them to see if they have budgeted for this or not.
 - What activities will your evaluator budget for and what do you need to budget for? You should be having open discussions with your evaluator on gaps and who should be budgeting for specific activity.

Monitoring data & quality assurance

- 14** Do you have systems and process to collect monitoring data and data on delivery?
- What monitoring data do you collect? What do you need to collect for the evaluation? It is critical you speak with your evaluator to list all data fields needed but examples include generic data such as name, DOB, gender, ethnicity etc. Please also familiarise yourself with YEFs demographic data policy.
 - You will need to collect individual level data on participants, do you have the systems and processes to do this? Do you need a new system or process? Do you need to update existing systems and processes? Who will do this? How long will it take? What's the cost?

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- c. You will need to collect data on delivery too i.e., each session will need to be logged and key metrics completed, how do you do this? It is critical you speak with your evaluator to list all data fields needed.
- d. How do you track practitioner delivery? How do you know it is consistent and of the quality you expect?
- e. Will staff need to be trained in using the monitoring, delivery and quality assurance systems and processes? Will they need support?
- f. How do staff access this data? Do they need laptops? Tablets? Phones? Or is it paper based? What resources or equipment is needed and at what scale?
Note: You may need time to assess data security processes. Also consider how/when data will be shared with evaluator, e.g., if collected on a rolling basis, a secure live version of the spreadsheet works well for continual updates.

Information Sheets & Consent

15 Who is gaining consent from participants and parents?

- a. Are practitioners doing this? When and how are they doing this? What do they need to do this? How long does this take? What resource or equipment might be needed for this?
- b. Do staff need to be trained and supported? Do they need to feedback what is working well or less well in this process? How do they do this?

*Note: Your evaluator would normally be responsible for producing all documentation relating to **consent to being part of the trial** and consideration of how to collect this – distribution of this may be facilitated by the project team. The project team will then be responsible for collecting consent to be in the programme once young people have been randomised to the intervention group. Talk to your evaluator to establish exact roles and responsibilities.*

Survey completion and interviews

16 Who is completing the surveys? – Where possible evaluators will be the ones collecting baseline/outcome survey data. However, this may not always be possible, you should work with your evaluator to understand the role in supporting survey completion or other qualitative activities such as interview/focus groups.

- a. Do practitioners support participants and parents to complete surveys? Do they do it at baseline, endline and is there a follow up? How and where do they do this? How long does this take? Do they need to travel? Do they need training? How do they send the survey data to the evaluators? What resource and equipment might they need?
- b. Do practitioners themselves need to complete surveys? When and how is this done?

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- c. Do practitioners need to support evaluators set up interviews with participants and parents or others involved in the project e.g. teachers etc? What's needed to facilitate the interviews? What resource or equipment is required?

Administrative data collection

- 17** Does the evaluation require access to local admin data? i.e., LA data, Police Data, Health Data. School data?
 - a. What are you trying to access? How often is this data required? Who needs to be involved? How much time and resource is needed from partners?
 - b. Do you need specific support to access this data i.e., a designated person or team that supports this whole process? What does this look like and how much does this cost?

Incentives

YEF does support the use of incentives to engage young people in evaluation activities. This will normally sit within the evaluator's budget, however we expect projects to ask the following questions in discussions with their evaluator:

- 18** Are incentives being used to engage in the evaluation activities?
 - a. What are the incentives? What's the cost? What do participants get incentives for?

Control groups

Whilst YEF don't pay for the delivery of control group activities, we do allow projects to budget for evaluation activities with control groups such as data collection.

- 19** How much time and resource is required by the teams and practitioners involved in collecting control group data?
 - a. What support might be needed? What's the cost of this? Do you have enough staff? Do they need to be trained and supported?

Pre & Post Delivery Evaluation Activities

- 20** What evaluation activities take place before delivery begins and after delivery ends?
 - a. What are intervention and programme teams (including control) required to do before delivery starts and after delivery ends?
 - b. Have you factored in enough time and resource to support with these activities?
 - c. Have you factored in time to chase up data or support the evaluator where needed?
 - d. Have you factored in enough time to review key elements of the evaluation report once it has been drafted?

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Youth & Community Voice / Involvement

- 21** What resource do you need for engagement activities with young people and/or the community to support the delivery of your intervention or programme?
- Do you use a young person's advisory board? And a community advisory board? What resources are required for this? How long do you intend to use it for? Who manages and runs these groups? How do they feed into the intervention, programme and evaluation?

Data Protection

- 22** Do you have designated resource that understands the data project, sharing and storage requirements more broadly and specifically for the evaluation?
- Do you have enough resource to support setting up data sharing agreements, DPIAs, data flows and other key documentation required for the evaluation?
 - Who will be the Data Protection Officer for this project?
 - Do you have enough resource to support partners to understand and complete the DSAs?
 - Do have secure systems for data storage and data sharing? Are they sufficient?

Overarching Programme Management

Staff

- 23** Do you have a project manager overseeing the delivery of the intervention or programme in the context of the evaluation?
- We suggest having a project manager on a 1 FTE basis but no less than 0.5FTE
 - Does the project manager have enough administrative support? How much is needed?
 - Do you have resilience in your project management and administrative team? i.e., to account for sickness, leave or staff turnover?

Systems and processes

- 24** Do you have all the systems and processes required for monitoring, quality assurance, training and support, wider data collection?
- 25** Do you have the systems to capture and respond to safeguarding issues and concerns? Have you factored in building YEF's safeguarding policy into the projects safeguarding processes and ensured (if applicable) partner organisations are aware?
- 26** Do you have the systems to log learning, feedback and good practice?

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Governance

- 27** Do you have steering and / or operations groups? Who needs to be on this? How frequently do they need to run? What resource and equipment is needed to make these happen effectively to support the intervention or programme and evaluation?

Race equity

- 28** Do you have expertise (individual or a group) to help set up and monitoring delivery of the intervention or programme and evaluation in a culturally sensitive and racially equitable way?
- Can you capture learning?
 - Can you share challenges and determine effective and appropriate mitigations?
 - Can you share successes and good practice?
 - Can you ensure delivery end to end is fair, transparent, equitable, inclusive and diverse?
 - Can they help keep you accountable?

Overheads

- 29** What are your overhead costs? Overhead costs are those that are not directly related to the production of goods or services, but are necessary for the operation of a business. Examples of overhead costs include rent, utilities, insurance, legal fees, office supplies, advertising, payroll, and accounting fees.
- Have you accounted for staff sickness and turnover?
 - Roughly overheads should be 20% or less of the total budget

YEF visits, case studies and other

- 30** The YEF will expect to have 1-2 visits to observe delivery in some way every year, this may be a more formal visits with ministers and / or co-funders or informal with just YEF staff and partners. The YEF will also ask organisations to work with us to develop at least 1-2 case studies over the life course of their funding:
- What resources, facilities and expenses will you need to facilitate visits?
 - What resources will you need to support the development of case studies?

Conferences and knowledge sharing

- 31** Will you be attending any virtual or in person learning sessions or conferences with the YEF or on behalf of the YEF?
- These must be discussed and confirmed with the YEF first.

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Funding sources

32 Are you requesting all funding from the YEF? Do you have in Kind or match funding?

- a. In kind funding contributions can include: time or services 'donated' to project delivery. Donated equipment. Services donated from other companies or organisations. Use of premises or office space for the project.
- b. Match funding when funding is paid in proportion to funding being paid from other sources.

Top tips for budgeting intervention delivery in the context of an RCT/QED:

- ◆ Work out the entire cost of the intervention or programme in the context of the RCT/QED, then determine the proportion of funding:
 - ◆ You require from YEF
 - ◆ You can provide in In Kind funding
 - ◆ You can source from match funding
- ◆ Work closely with your evaluator to ensure you have costed all activities appropriately and to avoid duplication of funding for the same activities.
- ◆ Work closely with internal and external partners to understand true costs of delivery in the context of the intervention and control conditions.
- ◆ Produce detailed budget templates and ensure you include the total costs which includes funding from YEF, in kind and match funding. Clearly explain the reasons for the costs in the narrative column in the budget template – this will help YEF understand the rationale for costs and save time when reviewing and asking projects for justifications.
- ◆ Variations to budgets during delivery are rare, we expect you to have budgeted extensively during co-design and will expect delivery within the agreed budget envelope.