

The pilot partnership improvement programme, delivered in collaboration with IDeA, comprised four workshops for mixed groups of senior staff from local authorities and VCOs in eight areas of England. At the end of the programme, participants were asked to evaluate their experience:

80% rated the programme materials as 'good' or 'excellent'.

85% rated the programme content as 'good' or 'excellent'.

90% rated the programme facilitation as 'good' or 'excellent'.

In addition, participants were asked about the extent to which specific learning outcomes had been met:

80% reported that they had significantly increased their knowledge and understanding of the organisation, management and accountability challenges of cross-sector partnership working

80% reported that they had significantly increased their ability to apply this knowledge to practical situations.

*"The willingness of attendees to voice honest views, concerns, etc and to set aside the time to input into developments taking place locally has been incredibly valuable. I am very keen for the group to carry on its work and to keep the impetus going."*

*"I think that if you can maintain this level of partnership then it will have a big impact. It certainly has for [us]. I feel that now we are beginning to be recognised by the local authority and that they are starting to see the value. I also believe that it has given me an insight into the problems faced by the councils working very often to a tight agenda. "*

Overall, 90% of participants stated that the programme had met their expectations and confirmed that there had been significant improvements in:

Mutual awareness and understanding across sectoral divides

The development of more open and trusting relationships

The establishment of new relationships and networks, both within and across sectors.

*"We don't normally have, or allow ourselves, time to talk through the issues. This programme has given us the space to discuss difficult and often intransigent issues and has provided a really useful intellectual sounding board. We now have a sound basis for taking this work forward."*

*"All LA policy officers should be forced to participate in the future!"*