



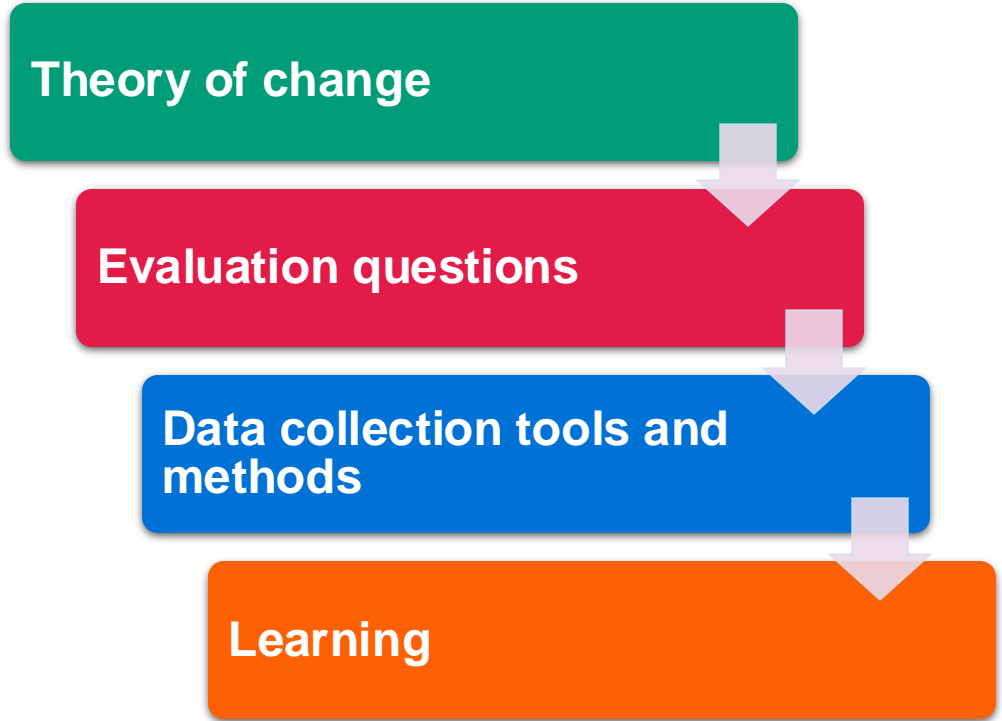
Answering  
tomorrow's  
challenges  
today

## Sport Welfare Officer Network MEL framework (Draft)



# MEL framework – key elements

- Theory of change provides the foundations of the MEL framework, informing other elements including:
  - How the key outputs, outcomes and impacts are going to be measured
  - How the evaluation will generate learning about what has worked well or less well and how this will be shared and acted upon



# National policy and strategic context

- Whyte Review (2022):
  - Highlighted a culture failure in British Gymnastics (BG) that did not include athlete welfare at its centre
  - Failures in BG's safeguarding and welfare training and education, policy development and implementation, and failures to recognise 'red flags' during training
  - Recommendations to address complaints handling, standards and education, and governance and oversight
- Government's Get Active strategy (2023):
  - Recognises recent controversies regarding issues such as discrimination, safeguarding and bullying within the sector, and need to work with the sector to ensure high standards of fairness, safety and inclusion
  - Highlights need for improvement of safeguarding processes at grassroots level
- Sport England Uniting the Movement strategy (2022):
  - Revised code for sport governance, safeguarding at the forefront of the work of Sport England's partners

# The Sport Welfare Officers Network project

- Project aims:
  - To add capacity and expertise to the existing safeguarding work of NGBs and Active Partnerships
  - To promote good welfare practice and safe sport at a local level
  - To support club environments to move from welfare compliance to effective culture
- Activities:
  - Includes the appointment of two new roles in the Active Partnership national team, additional central resources (e.g. training and MEL) and recruitment of 63 new Sport Welfare Officers.

# Purpose of evaluation

- Understand the extent to which the Sports Welfare Officer network is contributing to safer and more inclusive club environments, through engagement with NGBs and by providing advice, guidance and support to Club Welfare Officers
- Focus on the difference the network is having on those CWOs/clubs the SWOs are working with only
- Seek to understand the extent to which the support is contributing to improved club environments
- Support a test, learn and adapt approach by local APs and SWOs





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# Evaluation framework

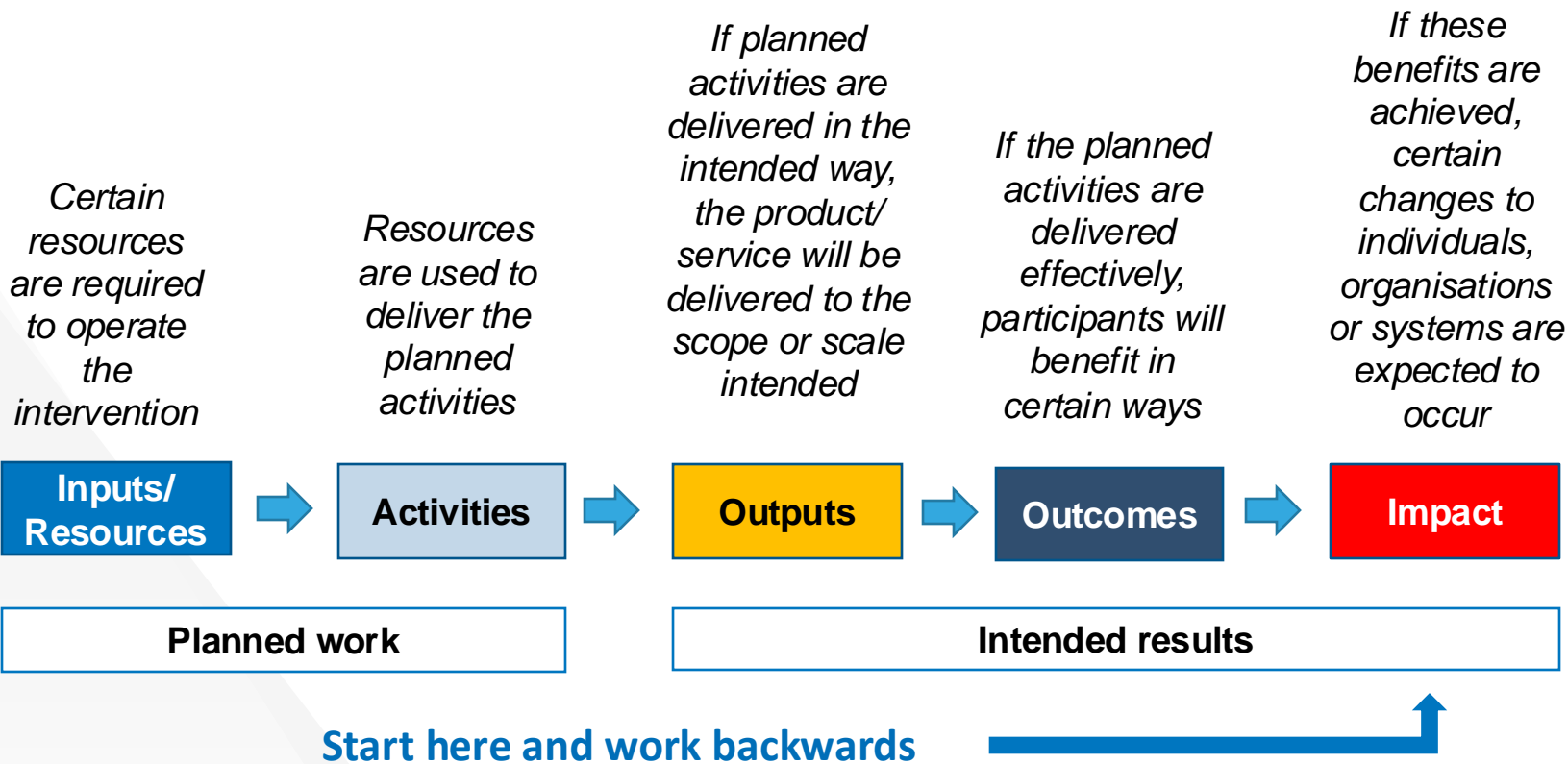


# Introduction to the project's Theory of Change

- A Theory of Change is a mechanism for explaining change - it shows the steps towards a desired goal, and the connection between these steps in terms of cause and effect
- It shows how we get from the inputs we have (e.g. funding, staff) to the overall outcomes and impacts we want to achieve
- It can also show the context in which this is hoped to be achieved, and the assumptions, conditions and risks involved
- Provides a framework for data collection, monitoring and evaluation to help explain why certain changes have or have not occurred
- Usually presented in the form of a diagram but accompanying narrative can provide further detail on:
  - Assumptions to explain why one outcome will lead to another
  - Internal and external enablers that need to exist for the theory of change to happen



# Laying the foundations of a Theory of Change

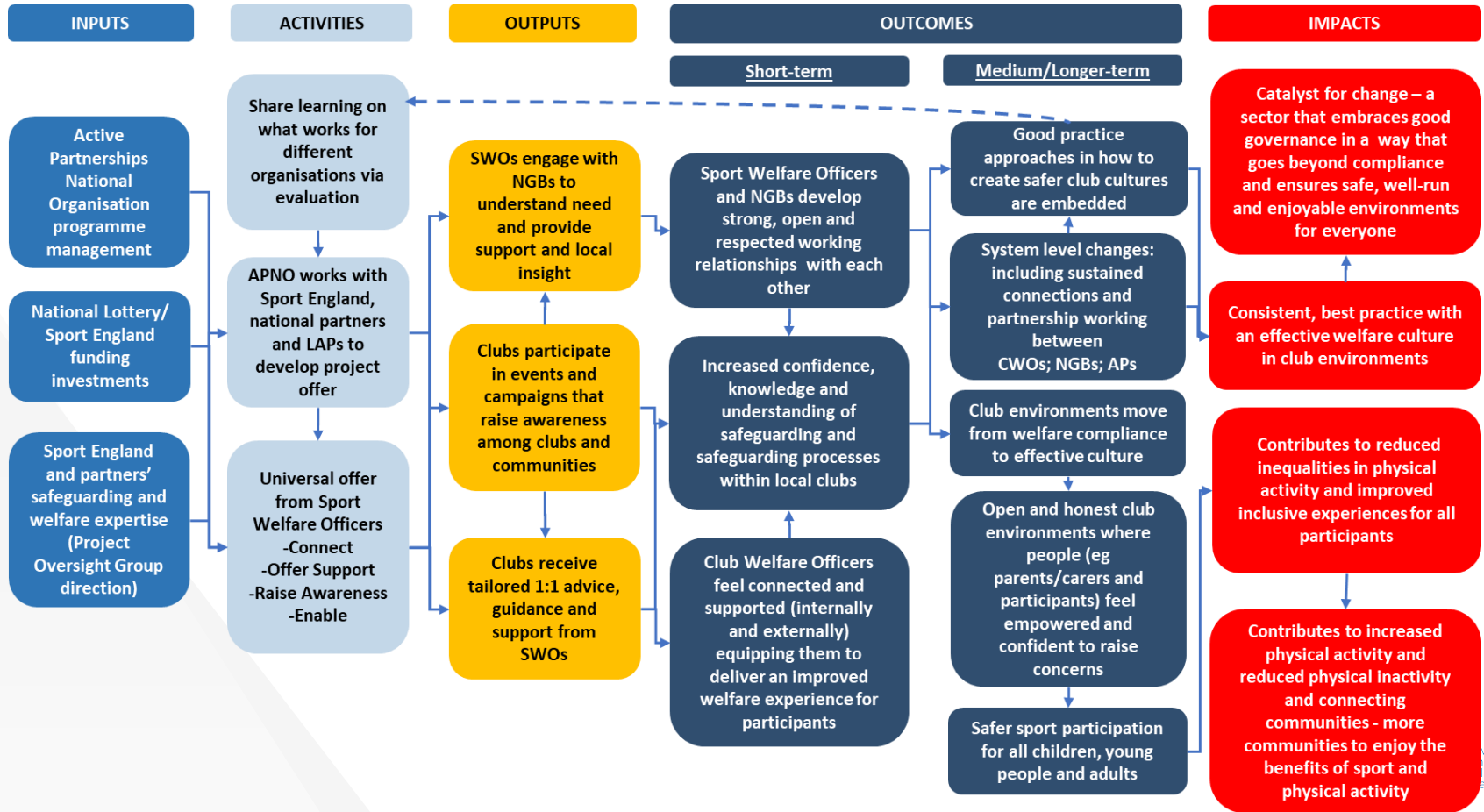




# Theory of Change development

- A Theory of Change was initially developed at the outset of the programme in close collaboration with the Project Advisory Group.
- Further work was then undertaken to identify specific short, medium and long-term outcomes in collaboration with the Network and key partners.
- Since being appointed as the MEL partner in August 2024, Ecorys has undertaken scoping interviews with key partners to explore the background and drivers of the network and priorities for the evaluation.
- Ecorys also facilitated separate discussions on the Theory of Change at meetings of the Project Oversight Group and representatives of Active Partnerships.
- Discussions have suggested that many elements of the initial ToC and many of the identified outcomes remain relevant however the discussions highlighted a number of areas for consideration.
- Suggestions are reflected in the latest version of the Theory of Change diagram and accompanying narrative....

# Theory of Change diagram



# Theory of Change: Key assumptions

- The Sport Welfare Officers and NGBs are able to develop mutually strong, open and respected working relationships.
- Through their engagement with NGBs, SWOs are able to provide targeted advice, guidance and support which is appropriate to the needs of clubs.
- The advice, guidance and support provided by Sport Welfare Officers leads to increased knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and safeguarding processes within local clubs and enables them to feel more connected and supported.
- The increased knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and safeguarding processes within local clubs and access to support networks in turn enables clubs to develop an effective welfare culture.

# Theory of Change: Internal and external enablers

- Internal enablers within the project's sphere of influence:
  - Sport Welfare officers are recruited with the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours.
  - Sport Welfare officers are able to work within and complement the sector's existing safeguarding and welfare networks and support offer.
  - Active Partnerships National Organisation and Project Oversight Group provide appropriate guidance and support materials to ensure consistent ways of working and standards in the quality of SWO support provided.
  - Active Partnerships use their experience of safeguarding and welfare to support SWOs in developing effective approaches.
  - The advice, support and guidance provided by SWOs responds to the needs of supported clubs.

# Theory of Change: Internal and external enablers

- Internal enablers within the project's sphere of influence (continued):
  - Mechanisms for sharing learning and good practice enable Sport Welfare Officers to learn and adapt throughout the programme.
  - SWOs are able to identify and connect with clubs and clearly present their role and offer.
  - SWOs have the resources to provide the level of support clubs need.
- External enablers (outside sphere of influence):
  - Wider initiatives, developments and campaigns promoting the importance of strong safeguarding and welfare approaches.
  - Clubs' willingness to understand the role of the SWOs and to have the desire and time to engage with SWOs in a meaningful way.
  - NGBs understand, value and support the role of SWOs.

# Introduction to evaluation questions

- Building upon the Theory of Change, evaluation questions provide a structure for gathering evaluation evidence and synthesising analysis for reporting and learning purposes.
- The evaluation questions are structured as follows:
  - **Key questions** to guide the overall evaluation which are a mixture of questions which identify the key lines of inquiry in relation to the project's strategic objectives and provide the framework for the overall evaluation conclusions and learning
  - **Specific impact evaluation questions** focusing on the extent to which key outcomes are achieved (and how)
  - **Specific process evaluation questions** which address the project design and delivery approach and the mechanisms involved
  - **Learning questions** which summarise key areas of reflection

# Key evaluation questions

- To what extent and in what ways has the Sport Welfare Officers Network contributed to improved safeguarding and welfare practice and culture in clubs?
- To what extent did the Network contribute to the strength of partnership working between Active Partnerships and NGBs (and other local and national partners) on safeguarding and welfare issues?
- What worked well (and less well) in the implementation of the project and in achieving outcomes and impacts? In what circumstances, for who, how and why?
- What were the challenges the Network/Sport Welfare Officers faced and how were they overcome? In what circumstances, for who, how and why?
- To what extent are there clear plans in place for outcomes to endure beyond the lifetime of the programme?
- What are the opportunities and risks for the sustainability of the programme?



# Specific evaluation questions: impact

- To what extent and in what ways have Sport Welfare Officers and NGBs developed strong, open and respected working relationships with each other?
- To what extent and in what ways has the Sport Welfare Officers Network contributed to an improvement in confidence and knowledge of safeguarding and welfare within clubs?
- To what extent and in what ways has the Sport Welfare Officers Network enabled Club Welfare Officers to feel connected and supported (internally and externally) equipping them to deliver an improved welfare experience for participants?
- To what extent and in what ways has the Sport Welfare Officers Network contributed to the development of a more effective safeguarding and welfare culture within clubs?
- Were any unexpected outcomes brought about by the introduction of the network, and if so, what were they and if and how did they add value?
- To what extent has the Sport Welfare Officers Network contributed to Uniting the Movement (via the impacts outlined in the TOC)?
- To what extent has the Sport Welfare Officers Network contributed to the strategic aims, objectives and values of Active Partnerships National Organisation?

## Specific evaluation questions: process

- To what extent were Sport Welfare officers recruited with the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours?
- How effective was partnership working between APNO, local APs, NGBs and other key local partners?
- To what extent did NGBs and clubs engage with the project? How did this differ across local areas and why?
- To what extent were Sport Welfare Officers able to work within and complement the sector's existing safeguarding and welfare networks and support offer? How did this differ across local areas and why?
- To what extent did the Active Partnerships National Organisation and Project Oversight Group provide appropriate guidance and support materials to ensure consistent ways of working and standards in the quality of SWO support provided?
- How did local Active Partnerships use their experience of safeguarding and welfare to support SWOs in developing effective approaches?
- To what extent did the advice, support and guidance provided by SWOs respond to the needs of supported clubs?
- How well did the mechanisms for sharing learning and good practice enable Sport Welfare Officers to learn and adapt throughout the programme?
- To what extent did approaches differ across areas and what were the factors affecting this difference (e.g. local context, background of Sport Welfare Officers, local priorities)?

## Key learning questions

- What were the most effective methods to build effective relationships with NGBs? In what circumstances, for whom, how and why?
- What were the most effective methods of supporting local clubs to develop a strong local culture? In what circumstances, for whom, how and why?
- What is good practice around implementing effective safeguarding measures in clubs for all participants (adults, children, young people) with different characteristics?





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# Methods and approach



# Data collection tools for use by SWOs/ APs

Tool	Purpose	Frequency	Who
<b>SWO data capture tools</b>	To understand breadth of activity across the network and how this changes over time	'Live time'/ongoing every six months	SWOs – ongoing SWOs/LAPs – six months
<b>Reflection tool</b>	To document significant changes, what is/isn't working well, lessons learnt, good practice, challenges faced and how overcome	Monthly/ quarterly	SWOs
<b>Club Welfare Officers Survey tool</b>	Understand change over time from a CWOs perspective, and through that, evidence key project outcomes	Baseline and then every 6 or 12 months	SWOs support CWOs to complete
<b>Journey mapping tool</b>	Capture key events in a supported club's safeguarding and welfare journey by highlighting changes over time in engagement, outcomes, and lessons learned from the support	2-5 per year (for each AP)	Administered by local APs with some support from MEL partner

# Other data collection tools to be developed

- NGB survey
  - Administered by national MEL partner
  - To understand levels of engagement with SWON, what is working well and less well in the development of relationships and why
  - Co-designed with NGB group
- Culture tool
  - Aim is to provide more rounded assessment of culture change within a sample of clubs (as club survey addresses Club Welfare Officer perceptions only)
  - Existing tools to be used in short-term
  - Bespoke tool for SWO programme to be developed over time building upon good practice tools developed locally

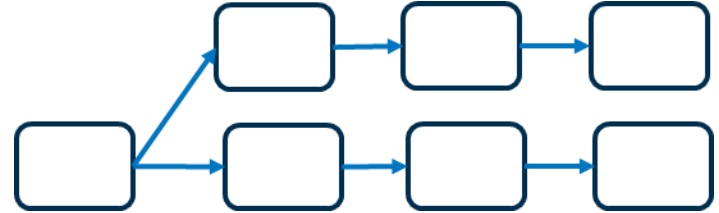
# Additional evaluation methods (1): Case studies

- Additional to journey mapping and undertaken by national MEL partner
- In-depth cases selected periodically through a sampling approach and based on consultation with local APs (e.g. through the capacity building support) and Project Oversight Group.
- Research activities to involve narrative approaches focusing on cases that show most significant change and to provide nuanced perspectives on how SWO activities are influencing changing cultures and practices in clubs.
- Possibility to observe sessions and gather views and feedback on how improved welfare practices are helping to ensure a safe environment for participants.
- Consider options for ensuring that athlete voice and adults, children and young people perspectives are included and not overlooked – potential to be included as part of journey mapping and MEL partner-led case studies.
- Potential to include a clustered case study approach whereby impacts and process lessons are examined according to specific evaluation themes and/or types of clubs supported.



# Additional evaluation methods (2): Ripple Effects Mapping

- REM aims to understand unintended consequences but importantly how these come about so learning can be shared
- Up to three workshops and analysis phases for each cluster involving local APs, SWOs and NGBs consistently in all workshops; option for national team
- Through the workshops participants will be encouraged to map important activities (or actions), impacts and ripple effects (i.e. those that occur because of another impact). Participants would also be prompted to explore causal connections by asking ‘how?’, ‘why?’ and ‘for whom?’ to understand the causality underpinning the link between activities and impacts, and how this is influenced by context.
- At the second workshop six months after the first workshop, participants will be asked to reflect upon what has happened since the previous workshop and to critically discuss the causal connections, which would involve a process of adapting and refining them or introducing new causal connections.
- At the final workshop further refinement of the impact pathways would be presented and with discussions on stories of change. The final workshop would focus on identifying learning points from the impacts and their causes to feed into reflection sessions and inform action planning.
- Option for LAPs to develop REM beyond one year.

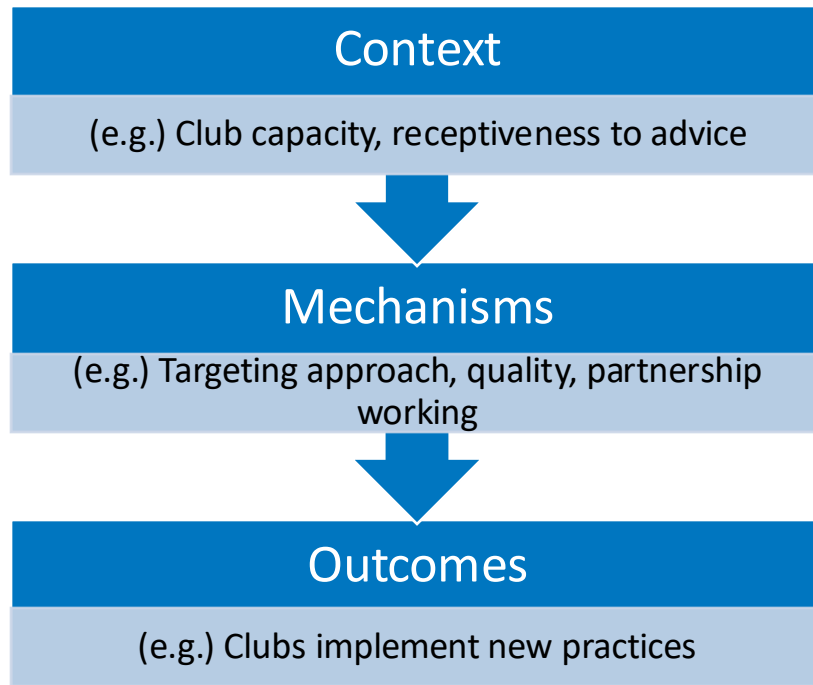


# Analytical framework (1) – attribution and contribution analysis

- Attribution analysis
  - Potential to attribute changes in confidence, knowledge and understanding to SWO support using the CWO baseline and follow up surveys
- Contribution analysis
  - Theory-based evaluation method and is particularly helpful where quantification and attribution of impacts is not possible
  - Used to build a performance story drawing upon the available evidence to consider how or whether the intervention contributed towards the observed outcomes, alongside other factors.
  - Used to test SWON ToC and help explain and contextualise the achievements of the SWON
  - Use an agreed scoring framework so the strength of evidence for each hypothesis can be compared based on strength of evidence from different sources, with a short narrative on how scores were derived. Scoring framework agreed up front and revisited at interim stages.
  - Approach to be developed in separate technical paper.

## Analytical framework (2) - Realist CMO approach

- Addresses the question:
  - *What works for whom, under which circumstances and how?*
- Underpins learning activities
- Capture learning that is useful to SWOs, the wider sector and other sectors
- Informed by ToC - causal claims and internal enablers
- A broad framework that can be applied at different levels with different levels of resources



# Role of regular data collection tools/ methods – key outputs and outcomes in Theory of Change

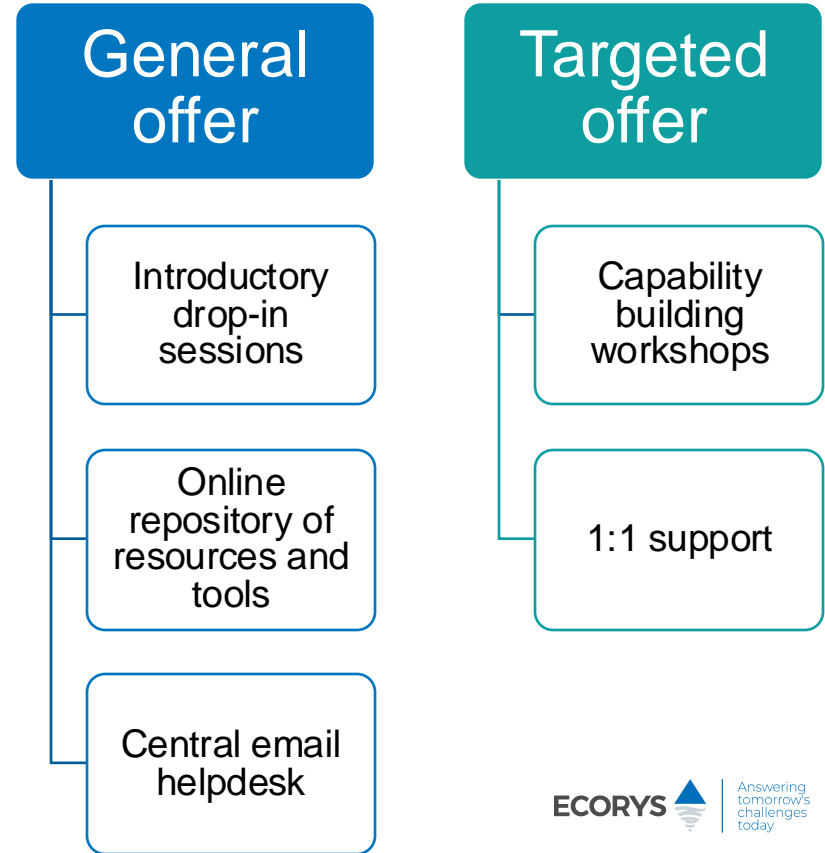
Evaluation theme (linked to ToC/evaluation questions)	ToC stage	Data collection method
Engagement activities with NGBs, clubs	Output	SWO data capture tools
SWOs and NGB relationships	Short-term Outcome	SWO data capture tools Self-reflection tool; NGB survey tool
CWOs' confidence and knowledge	Short-term Outcome	CWO survey tool (baseline, follow up)
CWOs feeling connected, supported	Short-term Outcome	CWO survey tool (baseline, follow up)
Development of effective culture	Medium/ long term outcome	CWO survey tool (baseline and follow up); journey mapping tool; case studies; culture change tool
Safer environments (leading to more positive experiences)	Medium/ long term outcome	Journey mapping tool; case studies

# Role of data collection tools/methods – other questions

Evaluation theme (linked to ToC/evaluation questions)	Data collection method
Unexpected outcomes	Ripple effects mapping
Recruitment of SWOs	Learning reflection sessions
Partnership working (between APNO, local APs, NGBs and other key local partners)	Ripple effects mapping; Learning reflection sessions
SWOs working within and complementing existing support offer	NGB survey; reflection tool
Role of APNO and Project Oversight Group in providing appropriate guidance and support materials	Reflection tool; SWO data capture; learning reflection sessions
Role of local APs in supporting SWOs	Ripple effects mapping; reflection tool
How SWOs respond to the needs of supported clubs	Reflection tool; SWO data capture, journey mapping

# Monitoring evaluation and learning support

- Key to enabling evaluation activities
- Segmented approach - proportionate to the needs and capacities of local APs
- Evolutionary process, offer continues to grow and develop across the lifetime of the evaluation
- Link to existing MEL training and guidance (including from other MEL suppliers on other programmes)



# Peer learning activities

- Learning is integral to the success of the programme and the evaluation
- Linked to forums and mechanisms already planned, work with APNO and local APs to support peer learning activities for SWOs.
- Ensure everyone can maximise their learning but in a free, non-judgemental way.
- Allow SWOs to share learning and experiences regarding their work, to exchange promising approaches, and to find solutions to common implementation challenges.
- Support evaluation research, by generating valuable qualitative data in its own right.





# Action learning cycle

- Six-monthly learning ‘sprints’ focus on synthesising learning from the previous period to identify key implications and actions. Each sprint would run over one-two months and include:
  - **Review and synthesis of data and insights** gathered from the quantitative and qualitative data (using the theory-based CA framework) and learning, identifying key areas for further testing, and priority insights for action.
  - **‘Play-back’ or reflection sessions** with Project Oversight Group, local APs, SWOs (e.g. via the peer learning groups) and APNO national team to contextualise the data, surface and test key assumptions behind the findings.
  - **Action learning workshop** with the Project Oversight Group to deliberate and agree on the implications of the findings and process lessons for the Network, inform recommendations for any changes in direction to be incorporated into the Network planning process, and what partners want to prioritise learning about next.



# Analysis and reporting

- **Six monthly reports** to include review and synthesis of data including data submitted by SWOs as part of their regular reporting, highlighting emerging outcomes and process lessons.
- Quantitative data as **interactive dashboards** using Smartsheet which will include local dashboards for use by local APs.
- **Annual reports** will focus on addressing the impact and process evaluation questions drawing on the analysis completed in the preceding period.
- **Ad-hoc reports.** Summaries of evaluation reports would be produced with different audiences in mind (e.g. national stakeholders/SWOs) ensuring that findings are tailored and accessible. Incorporating infographics and visuals where this could enhance the way in which findings are conveyed and potentially engage target audiences more effectively.
- **Presentations** at national dissemination events/away days involving wider stakeholders.

# Audiences and learning needs

Audience	Areas of interest/ learning needs
Participants	To understand how participation in clubs is a safer and positive experience
Sport Welfare Officers	To access emerging learning and good practice from across the Network
NGBs & their local clubs	To understand the role of SWOs in adding value and making a difference to their sport and their local clubs
Club Welfare Officers	To understand support needs and extent to which they feel supported in their role/confident in their role
Active Partnership National team	To understand : the extent to which the programme is contributing to their strategic objectives; learning and sharing lessons across the Network to support SWOs; the impact of Network locally and nationally
Sport England	To understand the extent to which their investment is contributing to their four strategic priorities/outcomes and lessons about what is/isn't working and why
Local Active Partnerships	To understand impact, variation across areas, what is/isn't working and why, lessons learnt, contribution of the Sport Welfare Officers Network to local place outcomes
Other safeguarding partners	To understand levels of engagement and confidence across NGBs and local clubs involved in the project, in safeguarding and welfare
UK Sport / Sport England / DCMS	To understand the difference the network is making in response to the Whyte review

# Work programme

Evaluation phase and task	2024					2025				2026				2027			
	August	Sept	October	Nov	Dec	January	February	March	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Inception Meeting	◇																
<b>WP1 MEL Framework development</b>																	
Desk review																	
Interviews with key stakeholders																	
Theory of change refinement																	
Finalise initial MEL framework (and refreshes)					◇												
<b>WP2: Support for ongoing data collection</b>																	
Develop tools and guidance for SWOs provided (& updates)					◇												
Data collected from SWOs in Smartsheets																	
<b>WP3: Surveys</b>																	
Survey design and implementation																	
Baseline and follow up surveys																	
<b>WP4: Qualitative research</b>																	
Develop longitudinal case studies																	
Clustered case studies																	
Ripple Effects Mapping Workshop																	
<b>WP5: Evaluation support, guidance and training</b>																	
Universal support to local APs																	
Capability workshops/webinars																	
1:1 support to local APs																	
<b>WP6: Learning programme</b>																	
Internal peer learning activities for SWOs and local APs																	
Action learning cycles/learning sprints (including analysis)																	
<b>WP7: Reporting and dissemination</b>																	
Six monthly reports																	
Annual reports																	