

# Evaluation guidance for ECHO network leads

*Document prepared by: Janet Diffin (Evaluation Fellow)*

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## Getting started with evaluation planning

1. Identify your **goal or overall vision** for your Project ECHO network.
2. Identify the **key objectives** for your network (usually identified at your initial curriculum setting day).
3. Identify what **outcomes** you are interested in evaluating both in the short and longer-term (these will link directly to your network objectives). Your evaluation could then focus on whether or not you have achieved your short-term outcomes.
  - Remember to consider the outcomes are these realistic given the time-frame of the ECHO sessions and whether you have access to data which can demonstrate your intended outcomes, or you have capacity to collect data e.g. using participant survey, feedback after an ECHO session.
4. Record your overall vision, objectives and short and long-term objectives in your **logic model** (see page 5 for a blank copy and page 6-7 for examples of a completed logic model). Reflect on the resources you will need, what activities you need to do to ensure you can achieve your intended short-term outcomes. Your logic model is the foundation for your evaluation plan.

5. Complete your **evaluation plan** document which encourages you to reflect on:

- **What indicator data will you use:** what data to have access to or what data can you use to determine if the intended outcomes are happening?
- **How will you collect your evaluation data?** It is important to choose a method that will be suitable for your participants e.g. online surveys will work well for those who access email regularly and have regular access to a device.
- **Who will be responsible for collecting and collating the data?** e.g. if you issue an online evaluation survey, who will administer this and write up the key findings?
- **When you will collect your evaluation data:** Are you going to wait until after your network has finished the block of sessions (outcome evaluation)? Are you going to collect data at any other time-points to determine how effective the network is (process evaluation)?

# Recommendations for evaluation of an ECHO network

## (1) Process evaluation

This will be useful for the continuous improvement of your network and will provide useful insight around which components are working and which may need adjustment e.g. are the sessions perceived as high quality? Are the topics relevant? Are any improvements needed to the network? Is the timing of the sessions suitable?

You could issue a short survey with closed questions at end of each ECHO session using the Zoom polling function to capture feedback from attendees instantly. The chat function could also be used to issue one short open question to attendees. (please ask your network co-ordinator/IT support for more information)

Alternatively, an online survey with closed and/or open questions could be issued using software such as SurveyMonkey after every three/four sessions as opposed to after every ECHO session (to avoid survey fatigue).

- Please see the 'Question bank' document for example questions (pg 3-4).

## (2) Continuous reflection on your attendance data

This data can be supplied to you by your network co-ordinator. You may be interested in looking at the median number of attenders per ECHO session. Have your number of attendees stayed consistent? Was there a dip in attendance at any stage? This links to the process evaluation detailed above – reflect on attendance after three ECHO sessions to determine if this is satisfactory for your network and what you are trying to achieve.

It may also be helpful to look at how many ECHO sessions each individual participant attended. This will enable you to identify if your network is characterised by 'low', 'medium' or 'high' attenders and will help inform your approach to evaluation. For example, if the majority of participants attend only once or twice, is it reasonable to expect improvements in confidence or knowledge? The focus of your

evaluation in this instance may be on what helped or hindered participation in the network. This information will also be important to reflect on if you plan to continue your network for another year e.g. will you try to increase participation in your network? In contrast, if your network has a high number of medium or high attenders, a more in depth evaluation of participant outcomes in terms of increased knowledge and confidence for example will be suitable.

### (3) Participant outcome evaluation

For a year 1 network, your main focus may be on identifying the outcomes for the participants themselves e.g. your objectives for your network. An online survey is a good method for identifying for example if participants feel that their knowledge and confidence in relation to a particular area has increased, and/or for identifying if they feel more supported in their role or less isolated.

- Please see the 'Question bank' document for example questions (pg 5-11).

You may also consider scheduling in an evaluation discussion session at the end of your final ECHO session (e.g. half an hour) in which you could ask participants how they have found participation in the network and what has been the key learning for them. Have they applied the new knowledge in their practice?

- Please see the 'Question bank' document for example questions (pg 12-13).

### Key considerations

- If you have identified a high number of low or 'one off' attenders in your network, you may get a low response to an online survey. In this instance, it may be best to include time within your last ECHO session to ask for feedback on the network from those participating or arrange a phone call with low attenders where possible to get some feedback.
- Think about the best method to use to collect survey data from your participants. An online survey works well for participants who have regular

access to a PC/tablet etc. but may be less suitable for participants who are not office based e.g. district nurses, nursing home staff.

#### 4) Service outcome evaluation

You may be lead of a more mature ECHO network (e.g Year 2/3) and observed a change at service level through delivery of your ECHO sessions and have access to data which supports this assumption, for example, have you observed a change in referral patterns or reduced costs within in a service. It can be difficult to evaluate how much Project ECHO has contributed to this.

Contribution analysis (CA) is a useful approach for evaluation of this type

CA is based on the theory of change for a program (detailed within a logic model). The analysis undertaken then examines the theory of change against the logic and data available from the results observed, the various assumptions behind the theory of change, and examines other influencing factors. What else could have been responsible for the observed change other than the ECHO network?

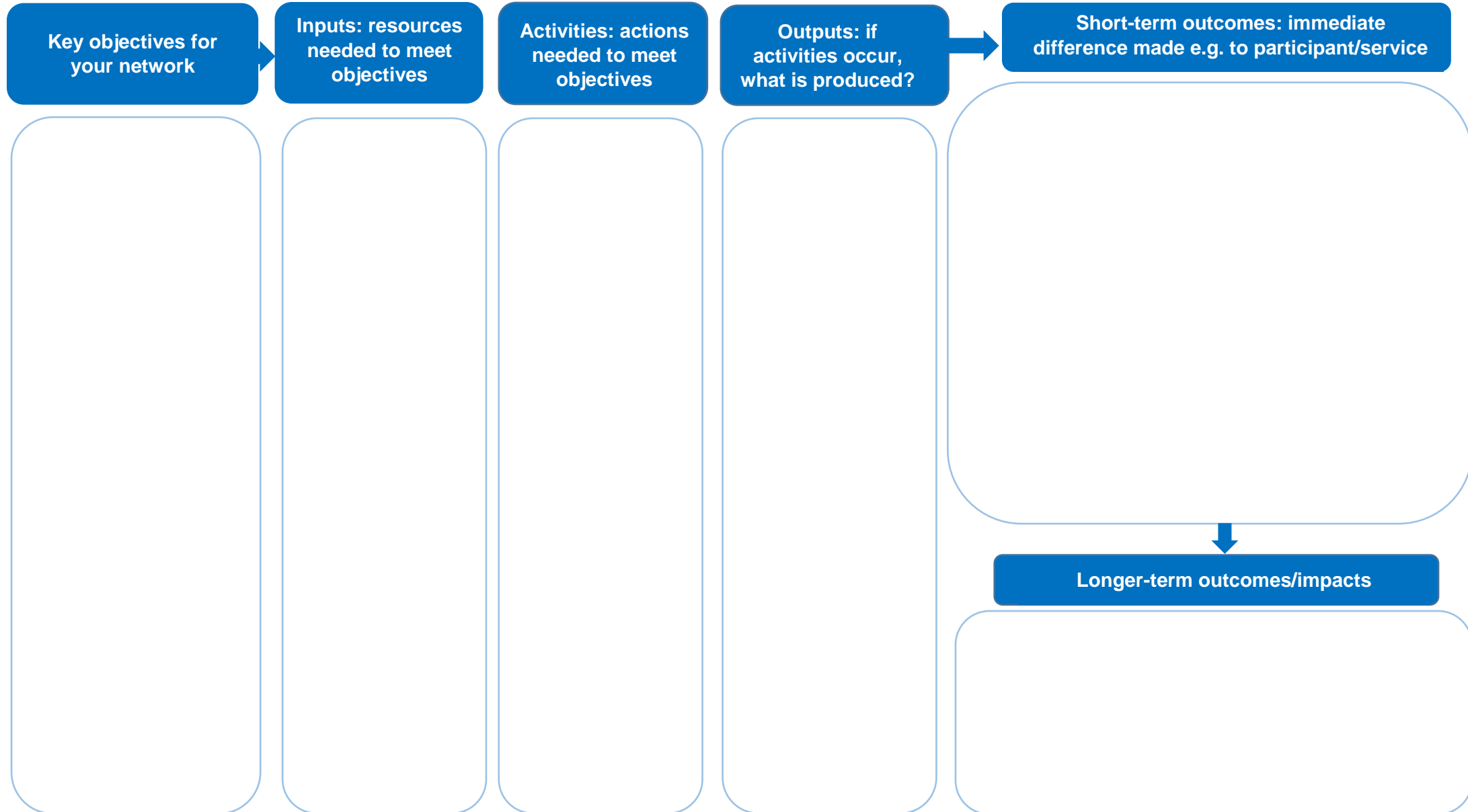
The overall aim of CA is to reduce uncertainty about the contribution an intervention is making to observed results through an increased understanding of why results did or did not occur, and the roles played by the intervention and other influencing factors. CA argues that if one can verify that the steps and assumptions in the intervention theory of change were realised in practice, and account for other major influencing factors— then it is reasonable to conclude that the intervention in question has made a difference, i.e., was a contributory cause for the outcome.

[For more information on contribution analysis, please click here](#)

You could also hold a discussion session/focus group with your network at one of your ECHO sessions and pose this as a question – how much do you feel Project ECHO has contributed to this change? Could this change have happened without this ECHO network? It should be noted that service outcome evaluation may be more appropriate for more mature ECHO networks e.g. in Year 3. Changes at service level would be much less likely after one block of ECHO sessions.

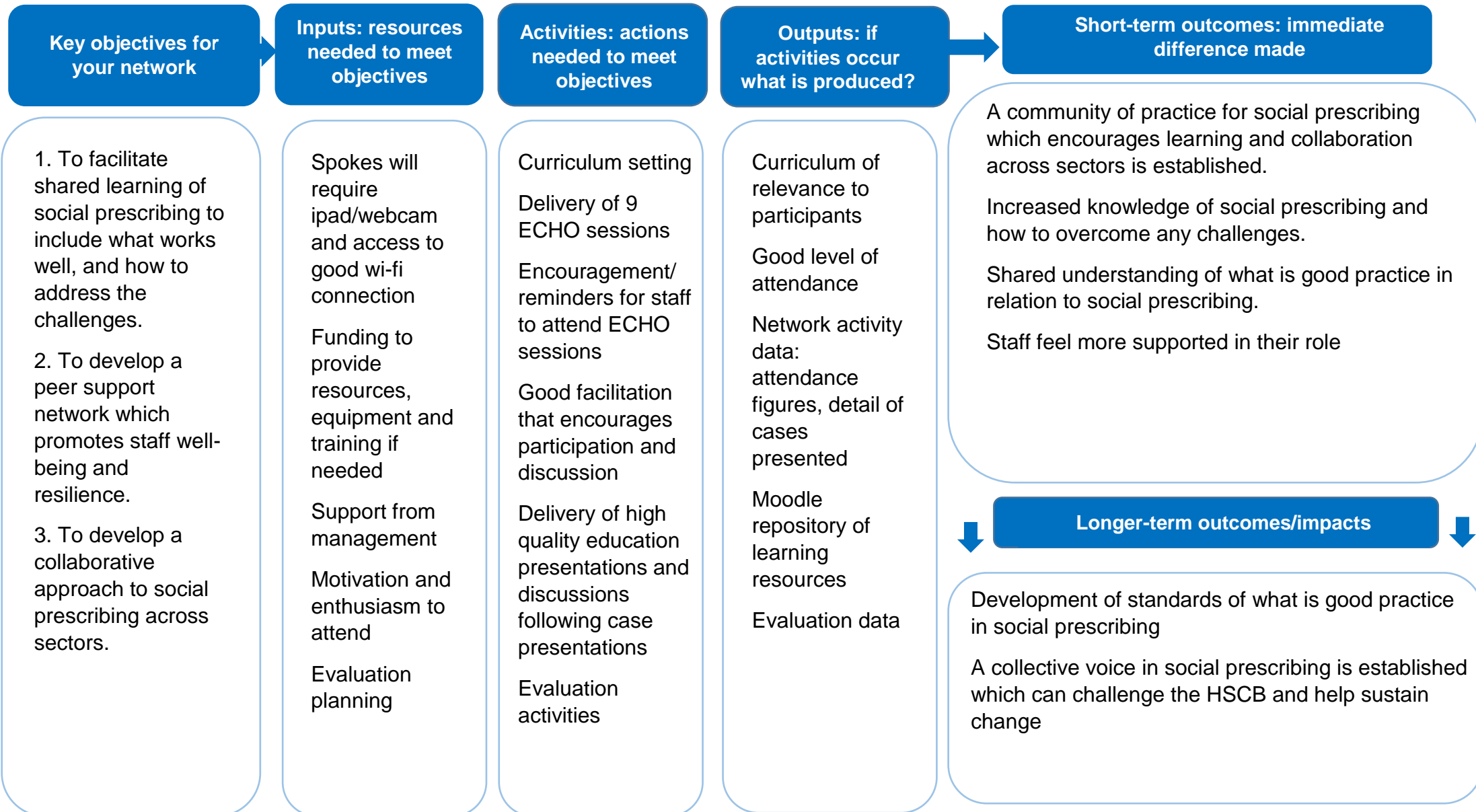
[Insert name of network]

Overall aim/goal of network:



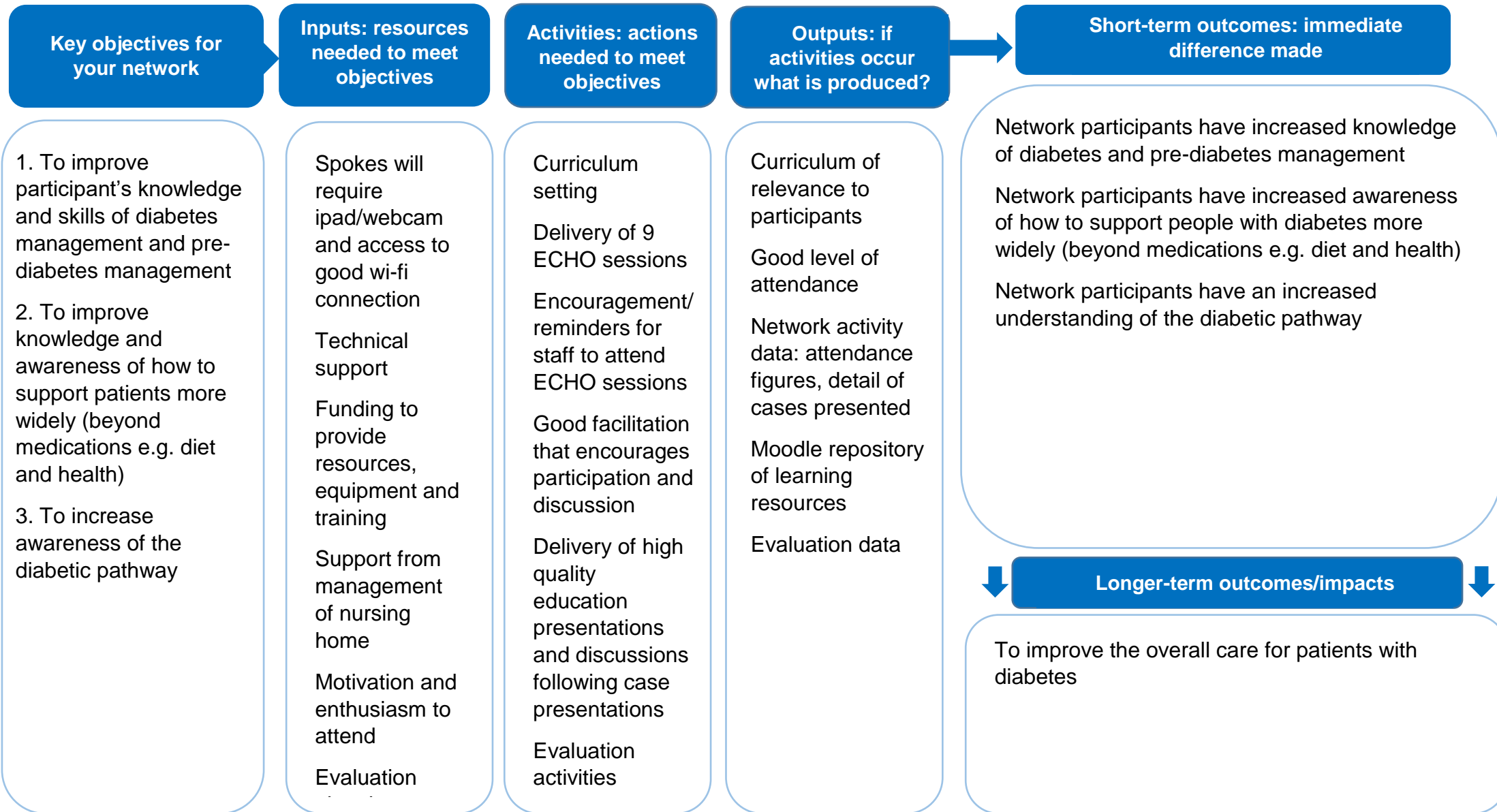
## EXAMPLE 1: Social Prescribing Project ECHO network

**Overall aim/goal of network:** To share knowledge, learning and best practice of social prescribing across a range of disciplines and sectors within Northern Ireland.



## EXAMPLE 2: Diabetes 19-20 Project ECHO network

**Overall aim/goal of network: to enhance knowledge of both diabetes and pre-diabetes management and support**





## Evaluation plan

[Insert name of network]

What outcomes or difference do you want to achieve in the short term?

Indicators: how will you know if this outcome is happening? e.g participant feedback, service data

How will you collect information about this indicator? e.g survey, focus group, service data

Who will collect or keep track of this data? e.g. ECHO team, network lead, other nominated person

When will this data be collected? e.g. before/during/after block of ECHO sessions


**What outcomes or difference do you want to achieve in the short term?**

**Indicators: how will you know if this outcome is happening? e.g participant feedback**

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### EXAMPLE: Evaluation plan- Social Prescribing ECHO network

**What outcomes or difference do you want to achieve in the short term?**

A community of practice for social prescribing which encourages learning and collaboration across sectors is established

Increased knowledge of social prescribing and how to overcome any challenges.

Staff feel more supported in their role

Shared understanding of what is good practice in relation to social prescribing.

**Indicators: how will you know if this outcome is happening? e.g participant feedback, service data**

Attendance data to include identifying if spokes from across sectors are taking part  
Participant feedback

Participant feedback

Participant feedback

**How will you collect information about this indicator? e.g survey, focus group, service data**

Collected by ECHO team – to request data from network co-ordinator  
Online survey issued after session 4

Feedback will be obtained after each session using the chat function

Online survey will be issued to all registered participants

½ hour evaluation discussion session scheduled during final ECHO session

**Who will collect or keep track of this data? e.g. ECHO team, network lead, other nominated person**

Network lead will request and keep track of this data. Will discuss initial data with hub team after session 4

Lead to finalise survey questions

Network lead to take responsibility – network co-ordinator will issue survey link to all registered participants

Hub team will facilitate the discussions

**When will this data be collected? e.g. before/during/after block of ECHO sessions**

This data is collected on ongoing basis

After ECHO session 4 survey will be issued

Feedback using chat function after each session

Outcomes evaluation survey issued after the final ECHO session

At final ECHO session