

EVALUATION REPORT TEMPLATE

1. Title Section

Title of Intervention	OD Consulting Skills
Academy	South West Leadership Academy
Programme Lead/Author	Programme Lead John Monahan Author Adrian Barton
Contact Details	Programme Lead Email: Phone no.07890294158 Author email: ajbarton216@gmail.com
Date	July 2017
Business Plan Area	Organisational Development
Key Words	OD Consulting Block's Model Network
Level of Complexity	High

2. Brief Description of the Intervention

Participants were introduced to the principles of consulting and were then asked to apply them to a fictional situation in a residential module. This was constructed as a 'real-life' scenario through the use of actors. Over the three months of the programme participants were asked to apply the consulting skills they learnt to existing OD interventions within their organisations. The longer -term aim was to establish a network of OD consultants to service OD needs within the SWLA region.

3. Context

The Health and Social Care system is in the midst of radical transformation, the agenda and its' associated challenges continue to grow. There is an increasing emergent need to provide skill and expertise across the system to support the transformation agenda and deliver bespoke organisational development interventions at a system level across the SW footprint.

The South West Leadership Academy has an established network of OD practitioners employed within the NHS who contribute at an organisational level to the transformation agenda. There is an aspiration and an opportunity to equip these practitioners with specific consultancy skills to provide

developmental support to the Health and Care System at a system level – thereby building sustainability and empowering the NHS to develop itself.

4. Evaluation Activity

Theory of change:

- Learning from a consulting model, facilitated by experience change consultants. Applying learning to a fictional situation in a 'real-time' scenario will enhance participants' practice and build confidence
- Learning will then be implemented within each individual's organisation, utilising the skills and evaluating the impact of the approach on the work they deliver

Expected measurable outcomes:

1. Establish a network of OD consultants
2. Increase the confidence in utilising consulting skills within a specific set of OD practitioners across the South West
3. Increase the understanding of Block's model and an increased application of the model within OD practice through delivery of specific consulting projects
4. A change in OD practitioners' behaviour in their approach to diagnosing, designing, and delivering through the use of consulting skills

Target audience:

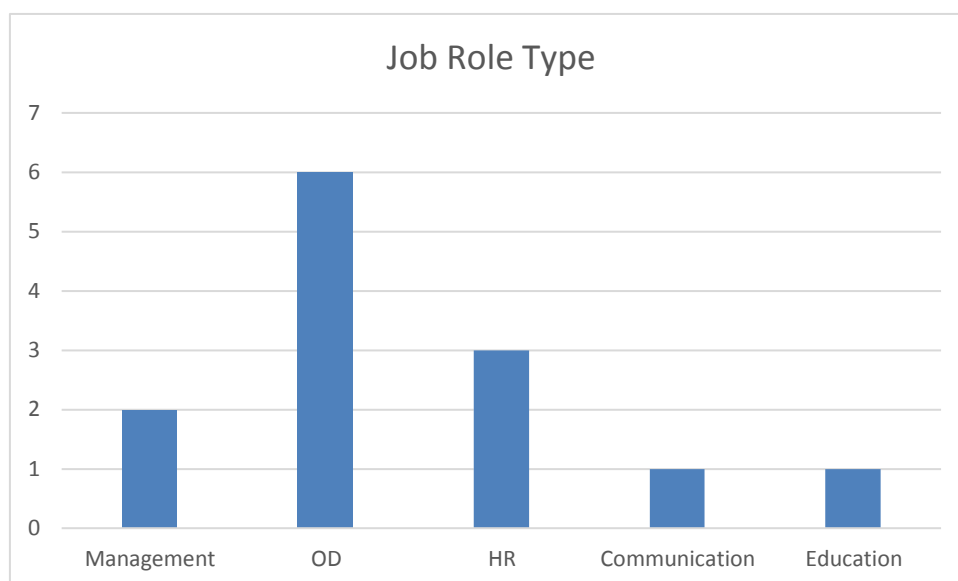
- Existing OD practitioners within NHS organisations across the six South West STP footprints

Evaluation methodology:

- Questionnaire delivered on the final day of the programme
- Observation of a learning session
- Post-programme questionnaire delivered four months after the final learning session
- Telephone interviews with a sample of participants

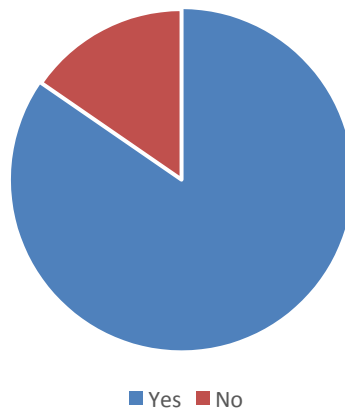
Findings:

End of Programme questionnaire results



*.1 Overwhelmingly delegates were Directors or HODs, predominantly in OD and personnel departments.

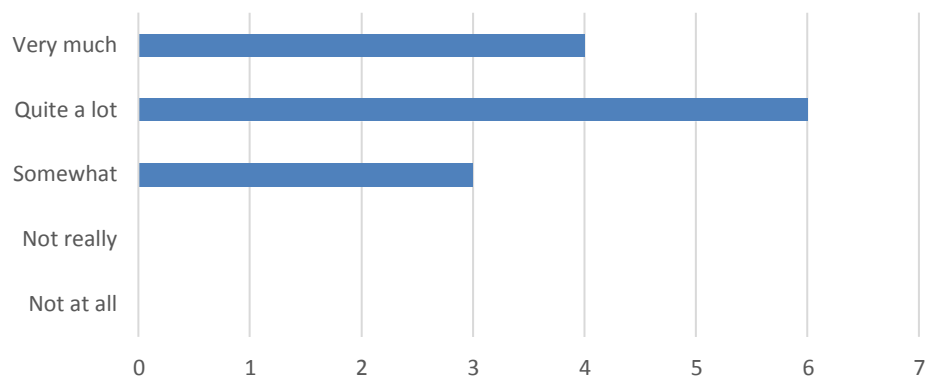
Have you participate in SWLA programmes before?



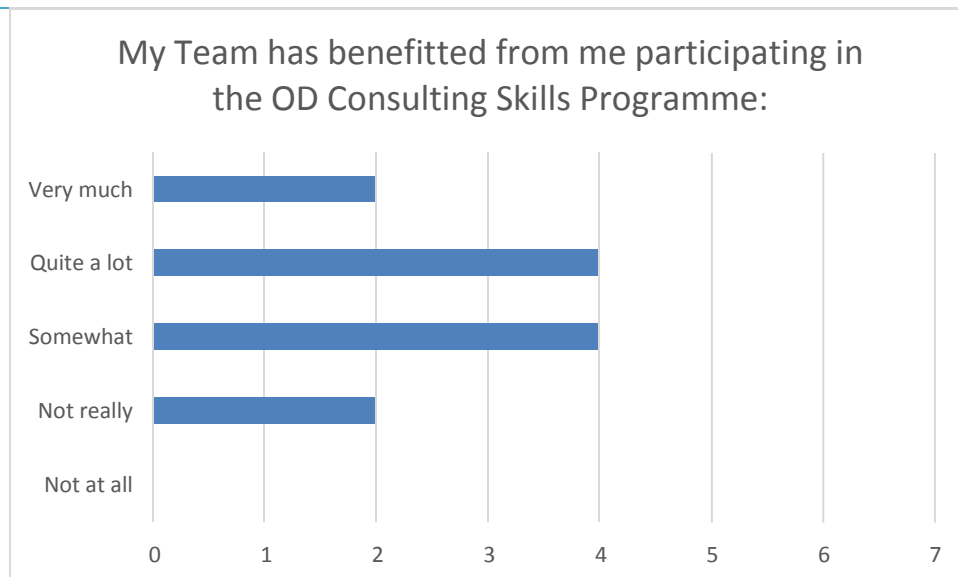
*.2 Nearly all delegates had participated in an SWLA programme before, with only 2 for whom this was their first experience.

*.3 Overall delegates felt that both their team and their organisation, as well as themselves personally, had benefitted from their attendance on the OD Consulting Skills programme. In no category did any delegate state that there had been no benefit from attending.

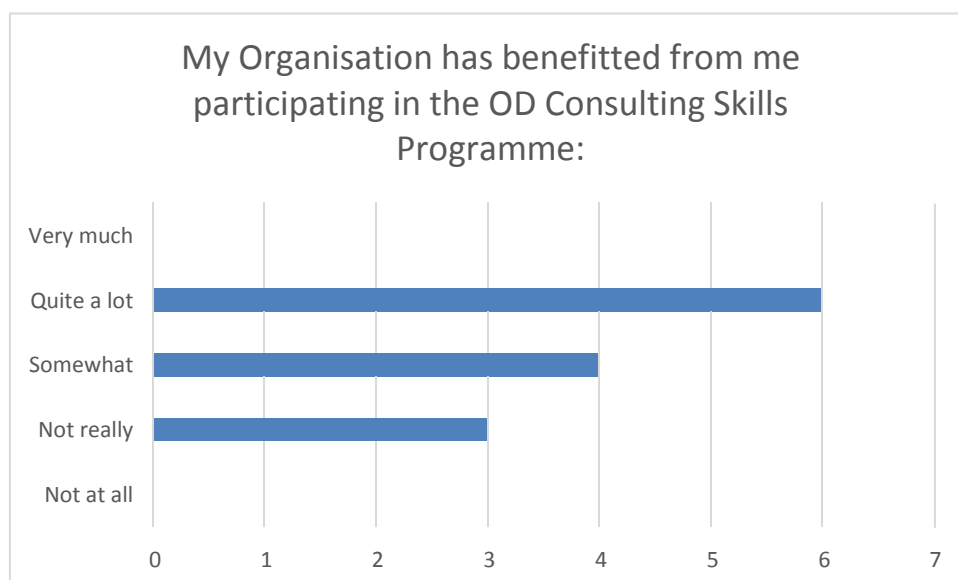
My Personal Practice has benefitted from me participating in the OD Consulting Skills Programme:



*.4 All delegates felt that their personal practice had benefitted from attending the programme, to a greater or lesser degree. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of delegates thought that their personal practice had benefitted 'quite a lot' or 'very much'.

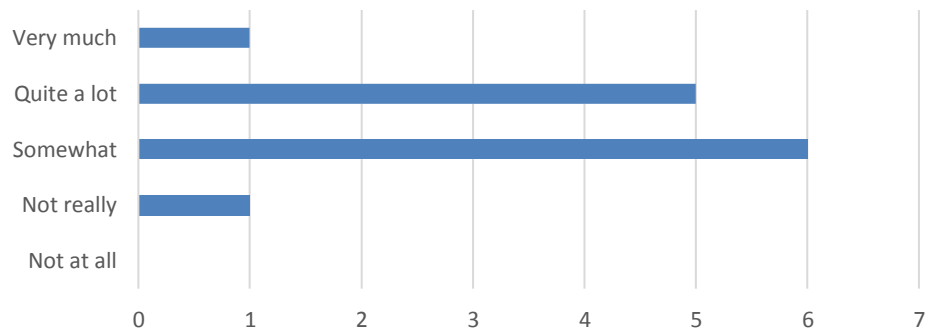


*.5 Delegates gave the most evenly distributed answers to the benefit of attending the programme on their teams. There is no obvious correlation between job role or organisation and perceived benefit to team.



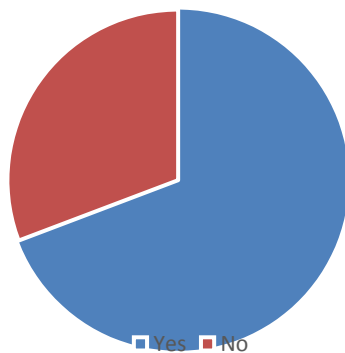
*.6 Responses regarding the benefit to delegates' organisations were less positive overall, with no delegates feeling that their organisation had benefitted "very much". Despite this, over 75% of delegates still felt that their organisations had benefitted "somewhat" or "quite a lot". There is no obvious correlation between job role or organisation and perceived benefit to team.

Others will have noticed changes in my working practices and methods as a result of me participating in the OD Consulting Skills Programme:



*.7 Most delegates thought that others would have noticed changes in their working practice to a reasonable degree. One felt that the changes were “very much” noticeable (they also felt that their personal practice has benefitted “very much”), but one felt that the changes were “not really” noticed by others (despite feeling that their personal practice had benefitted “quite a lot”).

Have you faced any barriers to using your learning from the OD Consulting programme?



*.8 Just over 2/3 of delegates felt that there were barriers to using their learning from the OD Consulting programme.

*.9 Key themes of the barriers to using learning are day to day time pressures and lack of opportunity within their role.

Here are some of the barriers participants noted:

- *Operational pressures mean that some longer-term projects are put on the back burner. More difficult to get traction within the STP but have been able to use them internally.*
- *Internal consultant syndrome. Time constraints with full time job. OD techniques and tools barrier. Implementing STP at the right level.*
- *My job role is operational so it's difficult to take the 'step back' required to truly put into place learning. Opportunities to use the skills outside of my role are limited - not part of any current change process.*

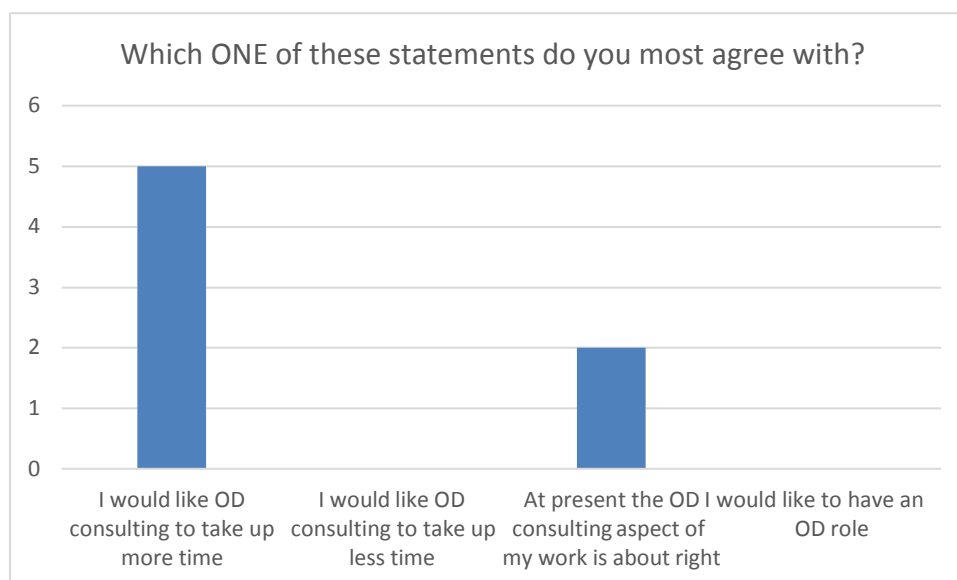
- *Day to day work pressures - I am not an OD practitioner so limited opportunity to apply learning beyond self.*
- *I am not routinely engaged in OD projects so my exposure is somewhat limited (hence my answers to some of the questions above).*
- *No immediate follow up by my organisation either to use day to day or as part of STP.*
- *Very busy in my day job - I have been covering another post. Embedding my experience into the wider organisation due to lack of understanding of my role and when I can be used in an intervention.*
- *Time! The STP work in itself involves hours of additional work over and above the day job. But, I am committed to using the OD Consultancy Skills - so will find a way to do this.*
- *Just having the opportunity. Rules restrictions.*

End of programme results summary

It is clear from the above data that the programme itself was a success with all delegates noting strong positives from attending.

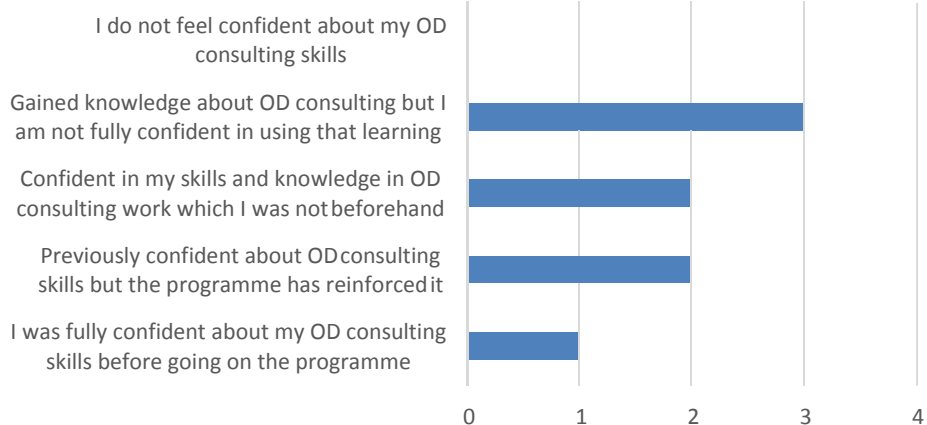
Post programme results:

We ran a second questionnaire, six months after the programme ended to gauge longer-term, post-programme impact. It must be noted that the response rate fell to around 30%. This raises questions about how delegates view evaluation, post-programme. It also raises concerns about how representative these findings are. With that in mind we present three key sets of findings which relate directly to the programme's measurable outcomes.



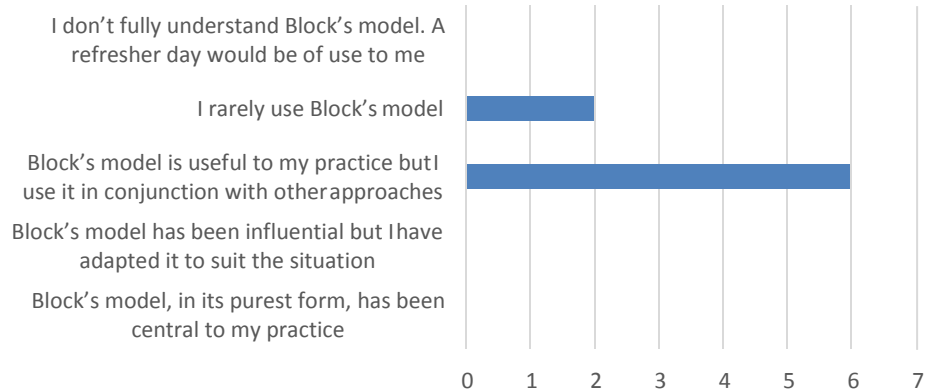
No delegate felt that OD should take up less of their time and none indicated that they would like to have an OD role, when they did not. The majority of delegates would like OD consulting to take up more of their time.

Please choose ONE statement which most clearly matches your experience



The majority of delegates were not previously confident in OD and felt that the programme increased their skills and knowledge, however the majority of those also felt that they were still not fully confident. Only one delegate indicated that they were fully confident before they attended the programme and had not increased their skills by attending.

In using your learning and skills from the programme, which ONE of the following statements best reflect the impact of Block's model on your practice?



All delegates understood Block's Model, but if they used it was in conjunction with other approaches, not in its purest form. Two delegates have rarely used Block's Model.

5. Interpretation and Discussion

In this section we intend to discuss and reflect on our findings as applied to the SWLA's expected measurable outcomes:

1. Establish a network of OD consultants

At the time of writing the report this network had yet to be established. Data from the qualitative interviews show that some of the participants felt such a network would be of benefit for two reasons. (a) as a form of mutual supporting alumni and (b) to allow senior managers within their organisations and across the six STP footprints to realise that there is a set of trained, skilled and willing OD consultant 'in-house' as opposed to having to use outside (and costly) consultancy firms. We conducted six in-depth interviews and of those five respondents noted that the lack of a network was:

'a missed opportunity'

'something that would really be of use...'

'Sometimes I wonder why we did the programme if no one is going to utilise our skills...'

I would love the opportunity to use these skills but if no one knows I have them how can I?

It was part of the reason I joined...

Thus, at the time of writing this aim had not been achieved. Moreover, it would appear that there is some degree of demand within the region for the type of skills this cohort have been provided with. We were made aware of at least one Trust using outside consultants and at least two others where there was a need expressed for a time-constrained piece of OD work. Arguably, delegates from this programme could have been used in these instances but it would appear that knowledge about this pool of talent is not freely available to the relevant Trusts. Equally, as the post-programme questionnaire shows there is a desire amongst the participants to use their skills in 'real-world' situations.

2. Increase the confidence in utilising consulting skills within a specific set of OD practitioners across the South West

Here we turn to the quantitative data generated by the post-programme questionnaire. It is clear from the data above that whilst completing the programme gave the delegates confidence, six months later they are not fully confident in those skills. This quantitative data is reinforced by some quotes:

I do use some of the skills but only within my job. I'm not sure if I could take them beyond my organisation...

Some of the skills are used every day; some aren't. I'm sure of those aspects of the programme I use, not so sure of those I don't...

3. Increase the understanding of Block's model and an increased application of the model within OD practice through delivery of specific consulting projects

We were interested to examine the impact of Block's model on the participants, give the centrality of the model to the programme. The post-programme questionnaires show that all understand it, but where it is used it is used in conjunction with other approaches. However, using data from the

qualitative interviews it appears that those we spoke to recognise the strengths of the model:

It's good...it gives you a framework...'

It gives you a step-by-step approach

However, of those participants who have had an opportunity to apply their learning, it appears that they have adapted the model, often in conjunction with other approaches to fit the need in front of them.

I don't use it from the start in a sort of step by step way. I have tended to judge where abouts I am in terms of the model and start from there.

It is good but I'm not a fully paid up devotee...

We would suggest that for those delegates with little experience and/or whose main role does not involve OD, Block's model was of great use as an introductory skill set. However, those delegates with more experience and whose role includes OD, there seems to be a move toward using Block's model as part of a portfolio of approaches.

4. A change in OD practitioners' behaviour in their approach to diagnosing, designing, and delivering through the use of consulting skills

Again, findings on this point were mixed. At the end of the programme all delegates noted some change in their behaviour and all agreed that others would also recognise that change. Here is a selection of quotes from the post-programme questionnaire, six months after completing the programme:

Diagnosing in particular - being clear about expectations and requesting some terms/ frames of reference as well as expected outcomes.

...improved on rusty skills - reminded of good modelling and structure

I make sure that I engage at early stages with the person who is commissioning my work. I make sure that I understand who all the stakeholders are and what their power/interest is likely to be. I provide a full diagnosis of the problem to the manager with potential solutions and make sure that they agree the way forward and take ownership of it.

I have changed my style to more consultative - keeping the decision making and overall influence in the managers hands.

However, there are questions about the long-term effects of those changes within the recurring theme of the lack of opportunity to be able to use the skills and knowledge the programme had given them. During the qualitative interviews we were told:

It comes back to the same refrain. I've got all this stuff from the course but nowhere to really be able to use it.

I would love to be able to, well I think I would be really useful to another trust – you know fresh voice and all that – and I know that I have the skills. What I don't have is opportunity.

The findings suggest that taking part in the programme has equipped delegates with the confidence

and skills to claim a behaviour change, but once again, the opportunities to use those skills are limited. Perhaps this is best summarised in this quote:

I did it [the programme] and loved it. I now think 'why?' It's like we've been forgotten. You had a cohort of enthusiastic people who were chomping at the bit to get out there and give our skills a go. Now it's what, six months? I've never used those skills and like everything if you don't use it you lose the edge and the confidence in your own ability...

Summary

We can state that the aims of the programme were largely met in as much that the programme itself delivered what was required and clearly had an impact on the delegates in terms of providing them with skills, knowledge and confidence within the framework of Block's model.

This reflects a pattern in previous SWLA evaluations. The SWLA commissions and delivers high quality programmes. The relevance of the programmes to contemporary leadership challenges allied to the skills and expertise of the programme delivery teams means that most SWLA programmes are well received thus helping to create a successful 'brand' and reputation for the SWLA. This faith in the SWLA 'brand' is evidenced by the fact that all but two delegates had attended previous SWLA programmes.

However, there is more to leadership interventions than the quality of the programmes themselves: increasingly the evaluation spotlight is aimed at longer-term impact.

If we take that perspective, a key programme aim relating to longer-term impact was to establish a network of OD consultants in order to allow delegates to use their skills to help organisations within the SWLA region address their OD needs. This aim has not yet been achieved.

As a result:

- Few, if any delegates have actually been able to use their skills as an OD consultant. In turn, this has led to questions being raised as to the purpose of the programme.
- The absence of opportunities to apply the skills, knowledge and learning provided by the programme has eroded the confidence of some delegates in their ability to act as an OD consultant. Even if a network was now established some of the delegates would need a refresher course.
- The lack of opportunities to practice OD consulting has meant that the post-programme impact of this programme on the SWLA patch has been severely limited.
- It would appear that there is a need for OD consultancy across the SWLA region (we are aware of at least two trusts employing external OD consultants) yet the lack of an established network of OD consultants means that Trusts and other organisations are unaware of the in-house resource created by the programme and are using costly external agencies to address their OD consultant needs.

6. Costings

The cost of our interventions is worthy of understanding and particularly to help us understand unjustified variation and best value. Please try and estimate the total cost of the intervention under the following headings.

Staff Time (estimate)	Third Party costs	Venue related	Materials	No. of Participants	TOTAL COST
	£40,000	£2,500		18	£42,500

<p>Comments on Costings: Is it necessary to explain any of the figures above or assumptions that have been made in estimating the costs of the intervention?</p>					

7. Summary

The programme set out to equip delegates with the skills, knowledge and confidence to employ Block's model in order to act as part of an OD consultant. The data shows that those aims were achieved.

However, where there are some areas of concern is the extent to which delegates have had the opportunity to utilise those skills beyond their immediate work environment. One of the key aims was to set up an OD consulting network and many of the delegates saw this as the main rationale for taking part in the programme. To date this has not happened which has had two negative outcomes:

1. All delegates interviewed felt a sense of frustration at not being able to use their new skills and knowledge as OD consultants
2. There is no real opportunity for post-programme application of skills beyond the immediate work environment of the individual delegates, reducing the impact of the programme and raising some delegates to question why the programme was commissioned

Finally, away from the OD programme but on an important methodological note for future work, the evaluation team had difficulty engaging delegates post-programme. This is a noticeable trend in evaluations and work needs to be done on ensuring better delegate engagement with the evaluation process if meaningful impact research is to take place.

8. Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Based on the research findings we recommend:

1. **There is a review of why the proposed network of OD consultants has not yet been set up.**
2. **On the same theme we recommend that discussion take place within the SWLA about if and how to facilitate post-programme application of learning, especially with high cost, high profile programmes. Post-programme facilitation is a recurring theme across a number of evaluations**
3. **Beyond the OD programme, we recommend that the SWLA gives some thought as to how delegates and participants engage with post-programme research and evaluation especially given the increasing emphasis on post-programme impact.**

9. Evaluating the Framework

In the interests of continuously improving how the network of leadership academies can improve its approach to evaluation please answer the following questions.

1 What did you find useful/helpful about using the framework

It provides a coherent framework within which to set reports

2 What did you find not so useful/not so helpful about using the framework

At times I felt as if I was placing sections of the report within the framework where they did not quite fit

3 What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the framework?