Ageing Better Evaluation Common Measurement Framework (CMF)
User Guide (Version 4.1)
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1.0 Introduction to the Common Measurement Framework

1.1 Introduction to this document

This user guide outlines how to implement and use the Common Measurement Framework (CMF) for Ageing Better. It is designed to support Ageing Better programme managers and their teams to use the CMF. It provides guidance on collecting and managing national evaluation data, and transferring it to the national evaluation team. Ageing Better programme managers are responsible for ensuring project delivery staff understand and implement the requirements of the CMF.

The following sections set out:

- The purpose of the CMF and definitions of key terms used
- How to tailor the CMF to your Ageing Better programme
- An overview of the procedure for collecting the data required by the CMF
- Details on how to manage and store the data required by the CMF
- A summary of the protocol for transferring data to the national evaluation team
- A guide to using the online database

1.2 Purpose of the Common Measurement Framework

The CMF specifies data that will be collected by partnerships to inform the overall programme-level evaluation. Having a robust evaluation for the programme as a whole will generate reliable data which can be used and quoted with confidence. The national evaluation will enable Big Lottery Fund and your partnership to provide meaningful evidence about what works in reducing and preventing social isolation in older people. Specifically the CMF data will shed light on whether the programme is delivering as planned and support continuous improvement through ongoing reporting on emerging findings. Furthermore, data from the CMF will provide evidence about what interventions are being delivered, the characteristics of older people that are being reached and the outcomes that they are reporting following their participation in the programme. When analysed alongside evidence from the impact study and qualitative research, this will contribute valuable knowledge to the evidence base in the field of social isolation, feeding into future policy and programme development.

Findings from the programme level evaluation will be shared with you through annual reports and learning events.

The approach to the Common Measurement Framework has been agreed with the Ecorys Research Ethics Committee (see Annex 1 for further information).
1.3 Contacting the national evaluation team

If you have any questions about this document, the CMF or the evaluation, please contact Ecorys.

The national evaluation team can all be contacted as follows:

By email: ageingbetter@uk.ecorys.com

Korina Cox (National Evaluation Manager): 0207 444 4216

Nicola Smith (National Evaluation Director)

Louise Scott, James Whitley, Jenny Williams, Wendy Bolton (National Evaluation team)

Contacting the Fund

If you have other queries relating to your funding or any aspect of the programme or its implementation please contact your Relationship Manager at the Big Lottery Fund.

Contacting the Development Support Team

Hall Aitken can provide a range of support including developing appropriate tools for local use, using the tools, asking difficult/sensitive questions and disseminating and acting on learning.

If you have questions on the support available from Hall Aitken, the Fund's development support contractors please contact your Lead Adviser or:

Claire Moyes, on claire@shephardandmoyes.co.uk or tel: 07747 103497.
1.3.1 Definition of key terms in the Common Measurement Framework

- **Activity** means any session for participants or volunteers delivered by an Ageing Better project.

- **Area** refers to the area covered by an Ageing Better partnership. There are fourteen Ageing Better partnership areas.

- **Common Measurement Framework** specifies data that will be collected by partnerships to inform the overall programme-level evaluation.

- **First project**, in the context of applying the CMF data collection tools, refers to the first Ageing Better project for which participants completed a full questionnaire. Where a participant engages with an Ageing Better project in a light touch way, and so does not complete a full questionnaire, this does not count as the participants’ first project for CMF purposes.

- **In-kind funding** refers to non-cash inputs to running your Ageing Better programme. This can include volunteer time, free venue hire and uncosted time contributions from partnership staff.

- **Informed consent** is the process of making sure a participant is given all of the relevant information about the evaluation and gives their permission to collect their data in full knowledge of this information. A participant must give informed consent to take part in the evaluation.

- **Mental capacity** is the ability to understand and make a decision when it needs to be made. A participant must have mental capacity in order to give informed consent.

- **The national evaluation team** at Ecorys UK is responsible for managing the national evaluation.

- **Outcome domain** refers to a cluster of related outcomes measured through the CMF. Each outcome domain contains one or more outcome measures. Some outcome domains – for example, Social Isolation – will be relevant to all programmes, while others, such as Co-design, may only be relevant to some.

- **Participant** refers to an older person taking part in an Ageing Better project or activity. Areas will need to apply a definition locally of how much engagement constitutes participation and ensure it is applied consistently across all of the data collection. An older volunteer who is expected to see improvements in relation to their own social isolation is also a participant.

- **Partnership** refers to the programme board and delivery team in each of the fourteen Ageing Better areas.

- **Local Programme** refers to the overall schedule of project activity at partnership level. The range of Ageing Better projects in an area jointly comprises the local programme.

- **A Project** is a time-limited endeavour to create activities for participants. A programme is likely to be comprised of many projects, which in turn may create one or a series of activities.

- **Self-completion questionnaires** are forms issued with this User Guide to enable areas to collect participant data efficiently and effectively.

- **A Volunteer** is a person who contributes significantly to an Ageing Better activity, project or programme without being paid. Areas will need to apply a definition locally of how much engagement constitutes volunteering and ensure it is applied consistently across all of the data collection. An older volunteer who is expected to see improvements in relation to their own social isolation is also a participant.

- **A Validated scale** is a collection of questions to identify and quantify concepts such as loneliness and social isolation. A validated scale has been rigorously tested and proven to measure what it intends to measure.
2.0 Appyling the Common Measurement Framework to your programme

It is important that the CMF is applied consistently within and across partnerships to ensure that the data generated are robust and meaningful. At the same, we recognise the diversity and complexity of each local programme and the need to allow some flexibility in how the CMF is applied to best fit local circumstances. This section describes how we will work with you to tailor the CMF to your local programme and its projects.

2.1 Tailoring the CMF to your programme and projects

CMF data for each participant will be collected through the use of one or more of three tools, provided under separate cover. These tools, which vary in the amount of data they request from participants, have been designed to reflect the different levels of engagement participants will have with the programme.

The tools are:

- **A postcard**, for capturing participant feedback only. It can be used for very large groups with very low-level participant engagement (e.g. a large public event). Use of this tool is not mandatory as you may have other processes for capturing participant feedback. Information from the postcard is not collected via the portal.
- **A short questionnaire** for capturing participant characteristics. This tool can be used when participant engagement is more than likely to be one-off (e.g. a one-off talk at a library).
- **A full questionnaire** capturing both participant characteristics and outcomes. This questionnaire should be used with participants who you expect to engage with the programme on an ongoing (not one-off) basis.

Ecorys has agreed with each programme manager the tool that will be used for each project. A proforma was supplied for this purpose (see Section 2.2). **Any changes to these plans or the proforma MUST be discussed with Ecorys so the national evaluation team can keep up to date with expected data.**

In addition to this participant-level data, a full count of all participants (including those that do not complete any of these tools) should be recorded and provided as part of programme monitoring data.

The short questionnaire asks a standard set of questions and these should not be altered, unless agreed. This is important to ensure that the data collected across Ageing Better is robust. However, the full questionnaire is comprised of ‘modules’ or clusters of questions related to particular outcome domains, which may be included or excluded to best fit your programme in agreement with Ecorys.

Questions related to social isolation, social contact and social participation are relevant to all Ageing Better participants and so will be a standard part of all full questionnaires used in all areas. The CMF contains other modules that you may not consider appropriate for your programme and may be excluded from the full questionnaire with sufficient justification.
These modules are:

- Co-design
- Influencing
- Volunteering
- Wellbeing
- Health.

A module should only be excluded if participants cannot reasonably be expected to benefit from that outcome domain at any point in the programme. For example, a participant taking part in a project that is not related to health outcomes should still complete the health module within the full questionnaire if it is expected that that participant may later participate in another project within the programme that does aim to deliver health outcomes.

In addition to the participant tools there is also a stakeholder survey tool which captures data on systems change. In order to ensure data quality and the anonymity of stakeholder responses you should ask your local evaluator to use this tool. Alternatively, local evaluators may develop and use their own research tools, as long as the data collected by these tools is sufficient to enable the programme team to respond to the CMF questions on systems change.

You may add extra questions to the tools if you wish – for example questions that you wish to include as part of local evaluation activities. Domains that you have agreed with the national evaluation team to be inapplicable to your programme may be deleted from the questionnaires.

### 2.1.1 Implications of the Mental Capacity Act 2005

Due to the requirements of the above Act and the arrangements for ethics approval for the national evaluation, participants who lack mental capacity to make a decision to be involved in the research at the time the decision needs to be taken will not be asked to provide data for the Common Measurement Framework. The requirements of the Act are explained in a Code of Practice [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/224660/Mental_Capacity_Act_code_of_practice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/224660/Mental_Capacity_Act_code_of_practice.pdf).

The code states that there should always be a presumption that individuals have the capacity to make decisions unless it can be shown that they lack the capacity to make a decision at the time the decision needs to be taken. Ecorys will agree a suitable protocol with each partnership, taking into account organisations’ policies, to ensure that data is only requested from individuals able to provide informed consent to providing data for the common measurement framework.

The CMF proforma asks whether projects/activities will be covered by the CMF. Where projects are expected to work exclusively with participants who are unable to provide informed consent, these projects should be excluded from the CMF.

### 2.2 Completing the CMF proforma

We have provided all partnerships with a proforma providing us with the details of the projects within your programme. See Annex 2 for the original proforma; a revised proforma was issued to all programme managers by email in October 2016. Any changes to these plans or the proforma MUST be discussed with Ecorys so the national evaluation team can keep up to date with expected data.
The information you provide will provide the basis for agreement with Ecorys on some key issues for the data collection process, including:

- Which data collection tools will be most appropriate for each project within your area
- Which outcome domains may not be appropriate for the programme and therefore may be excluded from the full questionnaire being used by your partnership.
- Research ethics, including the implications of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Ethics Approval requirements

Following the discussion, the proforma should be amended as appropriate and resubmitted to Ecorys for agreement. Ecorys can then complete the process of populating the CMF database with your projects so that participant data can be entered at the project level.

2.3 Updating the information provided on the proforma

If you need to amend the information provided on the CMF proforma – for example, if new projects come on stream or existing projects expand delivery into a greater number of sites and wards then was previously anticipated, please contact Ecorys with an amended version of the CMF proforma for agreement.

We strongly advise including all domains relevant for your programme from the beginning so that the evaluation is able to capture the full range of outcomes the programme will deliver.

To ensure the national evaluation team has sufficient time to agree the changes and add them to the database, please allow two weeks for the changes to take effect.
3.0 Collecting the data

This section gives a brief overview of the data to be collected for the CMF and describes the process for collecting the data your partnership has agreed to collect for the national evaluation (via the process described in Section 2).

It provides instructions separately for the programme monitoring measures, for participant characteristics and for outcome measures. Further instructions on administering the questionnaires are provided in the accompanying toolkit.

This section should be read together with the latest version of the ‘National Evaluation of the Ageing Better Programme Common Measurement Framework, Programme monitoring data, v3.0’ (supplied under separate cover).

3.1 The CMF contains three sets of measures

The common measurement framework contains three sets of measures for data collection, as follows:

1. Programme Monitoring Measures

These measures relate to overall programme activity in each partnership area including costs and numbers of participants and volunteers. These measures do not require collection of data from participants using the data collection tools. The approach to collecting this data is set out in Section 3.2.

2. Participant Characteristics

These measures provide a picture of the characteristics of participants taking part in the Ageing Better programme in each area. These measures mainly relate to personal characteristics that are thought to be risk factors for social isolation. The data is collected by two of the three data collection tools – the full questionnaire and the short questionnaire. In most cases data is requested for collection on entry to the programme only. The approach to collecting this data is set out in Section 3.3.

3. Participant Outcomes

These measures provide a picture of outcomes reported by participants following the period they have been involved in the Ageing Better programme. The data is collected by one of the three data collection tools – the full questionnaire. Some data on these outcomes should also be collected at the six month follow up stage. The approach to collecting this data is set out in Section 3.4.

3.2 Collecting programme monitoring data

These measures relate to overall programme activity in each partnership area, including costs and numbers of volunteers. These data should be collected for all activities and be captured as part of routine project administration. You will be required to report against all of these measures at the end of each quarter with the exception of the systems change data, which should be reported at the end of
each year. Each quarter begins on the first day of the month. Quarterly data is due one month after the end of each quarter.

**Update November 2016:** Future deadlines for 2017 will therefore be:

- **Tuesday 31 January 2017:** for activities up to the end of December 2016
- **Tuesday 2 May 2017:** for activities up to the end of March 2017
- **Monday 31 July 2017:** for activities up to the end of June 2017
- **Tuesday 31 October 2017:** for activities up to the end of September 2017.

Please ensure that your partnership and delivery partners are aware of these key deadlines and that you ensure that data is being regularly uploaded to the portal and quality assured.

**Update July 2016:** The labelling of this sheet has been improved and this section now includes provision for:

- **Budget** (figure in the original plan agreed with the Big Lottery Fund). This figure should not change during the lifetime of the programme.
- **Forecast** (figure that the programme currently expects for future quarters). This ‘current plan’ may be different to the ‘original plan’, and can be updated at any time.
- **Actual** (figure that the programme has worked with to date, which can be updated at any time).

All three must be completed even if the figures are the same. Figures should relate to NEW participants/volunteers (not existing).

The following sections describe how data should be collected for each measure presented in the Programme Monitoring section of the CMF database.

### 3.2.1 Expenditure on Ageing Better programme from BIG funding (£’000s)

This measure records how the Big Lottery Fund funding for your programme has been spent over each quarter. Please input the quarterly spend for each quarter in the cells provided.

**Update July 2016:** Please note that numbers should be rounded to the nearest thousand and expressed as follow £ [X] ’000s. As an example, the number £1,000 would be entered in the database as 1.

### 3.2.2 Expenditure on Ageing Better programme from other funding (£’000s)

This measure records how you have used funding from sources other than Big Lottery Fund funding to fund your programme. The system allows you to add separate lines for up to six types of funding source:

- Funding from public sector source
- Funding from private sector source
- Funding from third sector source
- In kind support from public sector organisation
- In kind support from private sector organisation
- In kind support from third sector organisation.
It is not necessary to add multiple lines for the same type of organisation. For example, if two different public sector sources have funded programme activity in a given quarter, the total value of the support from both should be presented in a single line under Funding from public sector source.

It is important that the evaluation recognises the in kind support contributed to the programmes. This should be recorded as a total of both in-kind funding and the cost of volunteer time:

- In-kind funding is a good or service that you have received free of charge. Time given by partners should be included within in-kind funding at their rate of pay, rather than within volunteer time. Match-funding from other sources is not to be included within in-kind funding
- To record the cost of volunteer time you should use the gross average hourly wage for full-time employees in England, £14.84 per hour for each volunteer.

3.2.3 Number of participants

This measure records the number of participants across the programme for each quarter and year. This includes participants who did not complete any of the data collection tools. Figures should be added for each project separately. Areas will need to apply a definition locally of how much engagement constitutes participation and ensure it is applied consistently across all of the data collection.

3.2.4 Number of volunteers

This measure records the number of volunteers in total (i.e. volunteers of any age) across the programme for each quarter and year. This includes participants who did not complete any of the data collection tools. Figures should be added for each project separately. Areas will need to apply a definition locally of how much engagement constitutes volunteering and ensure it is applied consistently across all of the data collection. An older volunteer who is expected to see improvements in relation to their own social isolation is also a participant.

3.2.5 Number of volunteer hours

This measure records the number of volunteer hours across the whole programme for quarter and each year. This includes participants who did not complete any of the data collection tools. Figures should be added for each project separately.

3.2.6 Number of organisations involved in referral network

This measure explores system change by recording the number of organisations that refer in to, or are referred to from, the programme. This should include both formal referral and general signposting. You may select as many of the following organisational categories as are relevant and provide a figure for each:

- Third sector organisation
- Membership organisation or faith group
- Clinical commissioning group
- GP
- Community health provider
- Hospital / other acute or tertiary provider
- Emergency services
- Educational provider
3.2.7 Number of organisations involved in delivery

This measure explores system change by recording the number of organisations who have been involved in delivering aspects of a project within your Ageing Better programme. This includes strategic roles as well as direct delivery of services.

You may select as many of the following organisational categories as are relevant and provide a figure for each:

- Third sector organisation
- Membership organisation or faith group
- Clinical commissioning group
- GP
- Community health provider
- Hospital / other acute or tertiary provider
- Emergency services
- Educational provider
- Local authority: public health
- Local authority: libraries
- Local authority: housing
- Local authority: social care
- Local authority: other
- Hospitality (accommodation, food, travel and tourism)
- Retail
- Transport.

There is also a category for other organisations not captured in the categories above.

3.2.8 Systems change: to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following

Key stakeholders are asked the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

- Older people are more engaged in the design and delivery of services that help reduce their isolation
- Services that help to reduce isolation are better planned, coordinated and delivered
- Better evidence is available to influence the services that help reduce isolation for older people in the future.

For each question, the possible responses are:
We are flexible in how this data is collected if, for example, local evaluations are asking (more detailed) questions which can then be mapped to these responses as described in Section 2.1 above.

### 3.3 Collecting participant characteristics data

Participant characteristic measures will provide a picture of the characteristics of participants taking part in the Ageing Better programme in each area, and including those that are risk factors for social isolation. These measures are required at the individual participant level. Some data is requested for collection on entry to the programme only. This data is collected through two of the three data Ecorys-supplied collection tools: the full questionnaire and the short questionnaire (see Section 3.5).

Practical guidance on administering the tools is set out in Section 3.6.

#### 3.3.1 Assigning a Unique Reference Number to each participant

The CMF has been designed to provide non-identifying data for the evaluation, to ensure the anonymity of participants and volunteers in the data reported. However, it is important for partnerships to be able to match data collected from the same participant over time, so that the evaluation can access whether Ageing Better has made a difference to individuals.

To achieve this you will need to assign a Unique Reference Number (URN) to every participant completing a full questionnaire or short questionnaire. It is the responsibility of each partnership to assign URNs to each participant. It might help to:

- Use a URN you are already using as part of your management information or client management systems
- Make the URN distinct (but not related to a participant’s personal details) and sufficiently different to other URNs (e.g. not assign URNs such as simply “1”, “2”, etc.)
- Maintain a record of the URNs applied to participants. This must be kept separate from the CMF data and must not be sent to the national evaluation team.

It will not be possible to enter data for participants without assigning each a URN. Areas will need to develop internal processes for projects to share URNs to ensure these are used consistently and not duplicated.

Personal Data must be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, as outlined in Section 4 below.
3.4 Collecting participant outcomes data

Participant outcome measures will provide evidence of changes in self-reported outcomes for participants involved in the Ageing Better programme. This data is collected through one of the three data collection tools: i.e. the full questionnaire. All measures are collected from participants on entry to the programme. Participants should complete a follow-up questionnaire when they exit their first project. Participants should complete a further follow-up questionnaire if either of the following applies:

1. The project is still in touch with participants and is able to arrange a post-project follow-up after six months
2. The participant enters another project. In this case, the follow-up questionnaire should be issued on entry to the second project and exit and so on for subsequent projects.

Project staff should therefore check whether a participant has previously participated in any programme activity (and therefore completed an entry questionnaire) to determine whether an entry or follow-up questionnaire should be administered (and therefore enable them to use the correct URN – see above). Practical guidance on administering the tool is set out in Section 3.6.

3.5 The CMF data are collected through the use of three tools

CMF data for each participant will be collected through the use of one or more of three tools, provided under separate cover. These tools, which vary in the amount of data they request from participants, have been designed to reflect the different levels of engagement participants will have with the programme.

The tools are:

- A full questionnaire capturing both participant characteristics and outcomes. This questionnaire should be used with participants in one-to-one or small group settings, or those who you expect to engage with the programme on an ongoing (not one-off) basis.
- A short questionnaire for capturing participant characteristics. This tool can be used if participant engagement is likely to be one-off.
- A local tool. These have been agreed in exceptional circumstances to collect some but not all of the data in the short CMF. Please do not use this option to indicate that a tailored version of the full or short CMF questionnaire has been implemented. If you are uncertain about which option to select please contact the national evaluation team.

Data on which tool has been administered for each participant is used by the national evaluation team to understand what CMF data is expected to be inputted. Completion of the field indicating which tool has been used is now required before other participant data can be entered.

Ecorys will agree which tools will be used for each project with areas as part of the process described in Section 2 above.

Each area will need to adapt the tools to their area, by inserting the relevant programme or project name where indicated, and deleting any questions related to outcome domains that you have agreed with Ecorys do not apply to your programme/project. We also recommend that the outcome domain headings (e.g. co-design, volunteering) be removed before you distribute the tools.
If you would like to make any further substantive changes to the forms, further to those specified in the brackets on the forms, please discuss this with the national evaluation team.

The following sections explain the purpose of the tools and with whom they are to be used.

3.5.1 Who should complete the self-completion questionnaires?

Each partnership will agree with Ecorys which participants are in scope and out of scope for the CMF. The data collection tools agreed with Ecorys for each project should be administered to all participants except in specific, agreed circumstances.

Participants who are agreed as being out of scope for the CMF and who do not complete any of the data collection tools will still be accounted for within the CMF through one of the programme monitoring measures, which requires areas to specify the total number of participants (see Section 3.2.3 above).

3.5.2 Full questionnaire

The full questionnaire captures the richest picture of participants, asking questions about both their characteristics and outcomes. As such it should be used with participants who are expected to see a change in their outcomes. The full questionnaire should be used at three time points: upon entry to their first project in the programme, upon exiting this first project, and either a follow-up six months after exiting the first project or upon entering and exiting a subsequent project.

3.5.2.1 What questions should be included in the self-completion questionnaires?

The CMF uses a modular approach which is flexible so it can be adapted to suit the needs of your programme. For example, if a project aims to achieve outcomes for older people’s ability to influence local decisions, the CMF includes a question to measure this. If this question is not appropriate, because it is not part of the objectives for your programme, then it does not need to be included in the questionnaire. Some modules of questions need to be asked to all participants (such as the demographic questions).

Agreement should be reached with the national evaluation team on which modules of questions are the most appropriate combination of questions (see Section 2), based on the aims and activities of the projects in your local programme (i.e., according to the logic model). The full questionnaire has clear headings showing which questions relate to which outcomes domain module. You can delete the modules of questions which are not appropriate from the template to make it simpler for people to complete.

Alternatively you can choose to include the measures in your own research tools. In this case, the team can advise you on question sequencing. Please contact us in this situation. Data from local questions inserted in CMF tools will not be collected via the portal.

3.5.2.2 Entry questionnaire

This form is designed to collect the information required for the CMF from participants upon entry to the programme – that is, at the time of their first significant engagement with any project or activity. Areas will need to apply this definition locally and ensure it is applied consistently across all of the data collection. Checks will be needed to make sure that a participant being issued with a full questionnaire has not already completed a short questionnaire. In these cases, participants should only be asked to complete the outcomes section of the full questionnaire.
3.5.2.3  First follow-up questionnaire
This form is designed to collect the information required for the CMF from participants upon exit from the first project. This is intended to be used at the end of the formal engagement with the first project. There is no set time limit on how much time should elapse between completing the entry and follow up questionnaires. This will depend on how long your projects / activities or interventions last for. Areas will need to apply this definition of ‘exit’ locally and ensure it is applied consistently across all the data collection.

3.5.2.4  Subsequent follow-up questionnaires
This form is designed to collect the information required for the CMF from participants in two circumstances:

1. The project is still in touch with participants and is able to arrange a post-project follow up after six months.

2. The participant enters another project that is part of the Ageing Better programme. In this case, the follow up questionnaire should be issued on entry to the second project and it can also be used for further follow up.

Areas will need to undertake record keeping to make sure follow up self-completion questionnaires are issued as required.

3.5.3  Short questionnaire
The short questionnaire captures participant characteristics but does not collect data on outcomes. As such it should only be used for participants in one-off interventions to enable the evaluation to capture the profile of participants who have benefitted from light-touch interventions. Importantly, we recommend that this tool is not used for engagement events or other activities designed to encourage on-going involvement in the programme. Use of the full questionnaire is recommended for engagement activities to make sure that changes in outcomes can be captured. The short questionnaire only needs to be administered once on entry to the first one-off project.

3.6  Administering the tools
This section sets out the practical considerations for administering the tools.

It is recommended that participants are asked to complete the relevant data collection tool as soon as possible after the first contact to ensure quality of data and to maximise the potential for capturing changes in outcomes.

3.6.1  Preparing to administer questionnaires
Programme managers will need to make sure that project staff administering questionnaires are briefed on the protocols and procedures for administering the tools.

3.6.2  Obtaining informed consent for everyone completing the full or short questionnaire
It is essential that all participants who choose to take part in the national evaluation research understand the reasons for collecting this data and give informed consent in writing to taking part. The information
and consent sheets provided in the toolkit will need to be tailored and agreed with the national evaluation team before being used.

The toolkit includes a template for preparing an information sheet and consent form which must be presented to every participant before they complete the full questionnaire (upon entry) or the short questionnaire.

The information sheet and consent form must be presented to every participant that has the capacity to make a decision at the time consent is being requested. A copy of a signed informed consent form must be collected for every participant whose personal data is included in the CMF. Local areas should hold on to original copies of all the informed consent forms and keep these securely in line with the guidelines on storing data (see Section 4). The national evaluation team reserves the right to request copies of the informed consent forms at any point during the evaluation (adequate notice will be given if copies are to be supplied).

The information sheet makes clear that participants can opt out of the research, or the use of their data in dissemination of the findings, at any time and their data will be destroyed. For further information, Annex 1 sets out our research ethics statement for the evaluation of Ageing Better.

If after reading the information sheet the participant does not give informed consent and does not wish to complete an entry questionnaire or have their data included in the CMF they should not be issued with a questionnaire to complete. They should still be eligible to participate in activities and receive services as normal.

3.6.2.1 Assessing capacity to consent to research

It is the partnership’s responsibility to assess the capacity of participants to give informed consent to this research. Ecorys will work with partnerships to make sure processes are in place to ensure this.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 covers how mental capacity – the ability to make a decision – is assessed. Partnerships should follow their own policies and protocols in assessing mental capacity. It is suggested that before asking participants to complete the questionnaire areas conduct a simple two-stage assessment as set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice.¹

The Code of Practice advises that the starting point is to assume that a person has the capacity to make a specific decision, unless there is proof that a person does not have the capacity due to an impairing condition (such as a disability). It goes on to state that an assessment of a person’s capacity must be based on their ability to make a specific decision at the time it needs to be made.

The Code of Practice states that: the first stage is to determine: Does the person have an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, their mind or brain? This might include:

- Conditions associated with some forms of mental illness

- Dementia
- Significant learning disabilities
- The long-term effects of brain damage
- Physical or medical conditions that cause confusion, drowsiness or loss of consciousness
- Delirium
- Concussion following a head injury
- The symptoms of alcohol or drug use.

The second stage is to determine: *Does the impairment or disturbance mean that the person is unable to make a specific decision when they need to?* They are unable to make a decision if they cannot:

- Understand information about the decision to be made (in the participant information sheet)
- Retain that information in their mind
- Use or weigh that information as part of the decision-making process
- Communicate their decision (by talking, using sign language or any other means).

If these two conditions are met, it is not appropriate for that person to be asked to complete the questionnaire. It is not possible within the time, resources and expertise available for the implementation of the CMF to ensure the meaningful involvement of people without mental capacity. Furthermore, ethical approval has not been sought for the involvement of participants without capacity to provide informed consent to their involvement in the research. This does not preclude consent being sought for specific case study qualitative or impact investigation at later stages of the evaluation and this will be discussed with individual partnerships. As noted, these protocols relate only to data being collected for the national evaluation research.

### 3.6.3 What if participants need support to complete the self-completion questionnaires?

Some participants may request support to read the questionnaire and record their answers. If they do, you may decide to provide this support to them by facilitating a process in which project staff read aloud the options and ask for a response. Because the questions are sensitive, you should only assist participants in reading aloud the questions if they specifically request this. This should be done in a private space to avoid compromising confidentiality. Please ensure that staff are briefed not suggest a response option to them or influence responses. It is important to allow participants to give their own opinion. If a participant does not wish to answer a question they can choose to skip it and move onto the next one.

Alternatively participants may want to ask a friend or relative to assist them. If they take the self-completion survey away from the project / delivery venue (e.g. back home) you will need to provide them with a return envelope to send the survey back to you for data entry.

Large print versions of the survey have been supplied. Ecorys can provide translated versions of the questionnaires in languages agreed with Big Lottery Fund. If alternative formats are required please contact the national evaluation team for advice.

### 3.6.4 Administering the Exit and Follow-up self-completion questionnaires

Exit surveys for participants can be administered around the time that formal contact ends.
You should then aim to conduct follow-up questionnaires with participants after they have finished formal activities or formal contact with their first project. These should be completed with as many participants as possible. This will provide vital data on the sustainability of outcomes. The questionnaires should be handed out to participants for self-completion. The completed forms should be handed back to the member of staff once completed.

At each stage you should check that the participant remains able and willing to give their informed consent to take part in the research.

3.6.5 What if participants withdraw their informed consent?

If at any stage of the research the participant decides to withdraw their informed consent for the research their data should be removed from the CMF database and fully deleted and destroyed. They should still be eligible to participate in activities and receive services as normal. It is the intention that only programme managers have authorisation to delete individual records from the CMF.
4.0 Managing and storing data

This section provides pointers to Big Lottery Fund guidance on how areas are requested to manage and store data relating to the CMF.

It is important that all data you collect is managed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Detailed guidance on this is provided on the Big Lottery Fund website.2

For ease of reference this is reproduced in full below:

“We suggest you allocate responsibility for managing the equality data you collect to one person within your organisation. This could be someone who works in the office or a member of your management committee. Ideally the person should not be someone who has any authority for taking decisions about who can and cannot take part in your project activities or services.

If any data you collect is linked to an individual (so that someone looking at the data could identify the individual) it becomes personal data and is subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

If you do collect personal data you should comply with the eight Data Protection Act principles.

1. Personal data must be fairly and lawfully processed. Individuals must be told that their data is being collected, who holds their information, what their data will be used for, how long the data will be kept and who will have access to it.
2. Personal data must be processed for limited purposes. Your organisation must know why the data is being collected and must not use the data for any other purposes.
3. Personal data must be adequate, relevant and not excessive. Your organisation must satisfy itself that the data collected is adequate and relevant to fulfil the purpose for which it is collected.
4. Personal data must be accurate and up to date. The purpose for which the data is used will determine whether there is any need to update the data collected.
5. Personal data must not be kept longer than necessary. The data must only be kept as long as is necessary to fulfil the purpose it was intended for.
6. Personal data must be processed in accordance with the individual’s rights. The Act grants certain rights to individuals, including the right to know what information is held about them and the right to correct information that is wrong.
7. Personal data must be kept secure. Whatever approach you take to data collection, it is likely that you will want to store this information on a computerised database. You should store the personal data in such a way that someone looking at the data isn’t able to identify any individuals from it. This means keeping any personal identifiers (such as the individual’s name) in a separate place. You must also take appropriate measures to prevent unauthorised or unlawful access to personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of personal data. So you should make sure that only staff who need to view this information are given access to it.
8. Personal data must not be transferred to countries outside the European Economic area. Unless the country has adequate protection for the individual.

2 https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/managing-your-funding/about-equalities/more-information/data-protection
If you ask a child to provide personal information you need consent from a parent or guardian, unless it is reasonable to believe the child clearly understands what is involved and they are capable of making an informed decision. The Act doesn’t state a precise age at which a child can act in their own right. But as a general rule we suggest not collecting information from children under 12 without first obtaining the permission of a parent or guardian.

Bear in mind that if you don’t comply with the Data Protection Act your organisation could face a claim for compensation from individuals who have suffered damage or distress, or you could receive a fine from the Information Commissioner.” (Source: Big Lottery Fund: 2015)
5.0 Transferring data to the national evaluation team (Updated August 2016)

This section describes the process for transferring CMF data to the national evaluation team.

5.1 Entering the data using the web-based portal

The CMF data will be passed to the national evaluation team via a web-based portal (see Section 6 for detailed instructions). This has been developed to ensure that it works in modern browsers (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Safari and Chrome).

Each Ageing Better partnership is issued with login details to enable data to be entered via the portal. We recommend that data entry to the portal is done centrally by each partnership; Programme Manager logins will be provided for this purpose. If necessary varying levels of access to data are possible; we can provide additional Project Manager logins for this purpose. Each partnership can decide who will enter which data. A Read-Only or Evaluator login can also be provided for evaluation managers or other members of the partnership.

A summary of the permissions for the different roles is provided below.

The programme manager:

- has read/write access to all participant data within projects associated with the programme
- has read/write access to programme monitoring data
- has access to programme report

The programme manager:

- does not have access to participant data outside the managed programme.
- does not have access to programme monitoring data outside the managed programme
- does not have access to programme reports outside the managed programme

The project manager:

- has read/write access to all participant data within the project

The project manager:

- does have any access to participant data in projects outside the managed project
- does not have any access to programme monitoring data
- does not have any access to programme reports

The programme evaluator/read-only access:

- has read-only access participant data within the evaluated programme
The programme evaluator:

- does not have any access to participant data outside the evaluated programme
- does not have any access to programme monitoring data
- does not have any access to programme reporting

The programme administrator:

- has read/write access to all participant data across all projects within a programme

The programme administrator:

- does not have any access to programme monitoring data
- does not have access to participant data un-associated with the administered programme
- does not have access to programme reporting

Logins are issued centrally to the programme manager and the partnership is responsible for allocating logins to individuals. Logins can be shared.

Data can be entered on an on-going basis (in real time). Within four weeks of the end of each quarter we will expect all data for that quarter to be entered.

5.1.1 Technical information

The common measurement framework database is hosted on a server running Windows Server 2008 R2 Standard Edition as its operating system. This is a Web-server, providing the Web-pages to the user whenever the portal is accessed via a Web-browser. The data resides within a Microsoft SQL Server database (Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 Standard Edition).

5.2 Data security

The database has been designed to ensure rigorous standards of data security. When using the web-based portal you will assign a unique reference number (URN) to each participant. The database does not hold personally identifying information. The database can only be accessed by named database administrators. Access to account data will be restricted to individual users of the account and protected with a password.

Ecorys UK will manage all data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2008.

5.3 Access to data reports on CMF data

Using your partnership’s login details you will be able to download data to an Excel file. You can use this data for your reporting to Big Lottery Fund and your local evaluators can be given the data for their work. You can also choose to share this data with other Ageing Better areas if you wish. If you wish to share this data publicly you should follow any guidelines and agreements made with Big Lottery Fund.

The report feature is **ONLY** available and accessible to programme managers. Anyone outside this scope will not be able to see or access the ‘Report’ link.

To access the ‘Report’ feature:
• Navigate to the Ageing Better ‘Home’ page (This is the page you will see after you log-in to Ageing Better)

• Click on the ‘Reports’ link located in the top horizontal navigation menu next to the ‘Home’ link as seen in Figure 5.1:

Figure 5.1: Ageing Better Home Page: Accessing the Report Link

• Users will then be navigated to the ‘Report’ page where one will be able to click on ‘Programme Summary’ to generate and download the report – see Figure 5.2:

Figure 5.2: Ageing Better Report Page: Downloading the Live Report (Programme Summary)

• Once the user has clicked to download a report, it may take a couple of minutes until the file prompt pops up asking to either open or save the report – see Figure 5.3:

Figure 5.3: Ageing Better Report Page: File prompt – Saving the Report

• When the file prompt appears, right click on the ‘Save’ down arrow, and select ‘Save As’ select a location of choice (for example, Desktop) to save the report to.

• Locate the report to where you saved it to, double click the report to open. Once the report opens up in Microsoft Excel – click the ‘Enable Editing’ located within the yellow warning horizontal ribbon. This will take the report out of protected view and make it accessible and editable – see Figure 5.4:
Figure 5.4: Programme Summary Report: Report opening and enabling editing
6.0 Using the online Common Measurement Framework database *(Updated August 2016)*

Your CMF data is transferred to the national evaluation team via an online database (see Section 5). This section sets out practical guidance for accessing the system and entering your data.

6.1 Accessing the system

To access the site, copy and paste the following text into the address bar of your internet browser and press enter:

[http://ageingbetter.ecorys.org.uk](http://ageingbetter.ecorys.org.uk)

A login page should appear (Figure 6.1). Areas will be assigned with a unique username and password to access the system. In the event of losing or forgetting your login details, in the first instance you should contact your programme manager in your local area. If that does not resolve your query you will be able to request a reminder by clicking on the ‘Forgotten your password?’ link. Your details will be sent to the email address that you used to register to the system.

**Figure 6.1: Ageing Better Login**

You will then have three options:

- Add a participant
- View / edit an existing participant record
- View / edit programme data (Project Manager logins only).
6.2 Adding a participant

When you have logged in you will have the option to enter participant data.

- Click on ‘add new’ next to the bold title called ‘Participant Records’ and follow the instructions to create a Unique Identifier.
- Enter the name for the Unique Identifier
- Click the ‘Submit’ button.

6.2.1 Creating a reference

You will then need to create a reference for the participant (Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2: Add New Participant**

To maintain the anonymity of the participant you should assign a URN as described in Section 3.3.1. It is important to ensure that you are able to match up the participant record on the online database with local records for that participant.

6.2.2 Adding personal details

After creating a URN reference you will be asked to add personal details for the participant (Figure 6.3).

**Figure 6.3: Personal Details**
These include the programme in which they are participating in addition to a number of personal characteristics such as gender, year of birth and postcode. The lists of categories have been taken from the 2011 Census and **headings need to be retained in questionnaires**. Further information is available here: [https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/managing-your-funding/about-equalities/more-information/equality-categories](https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/managing-your-funding/about-equalities/more-information/equality-categories). For example, Black British participants would be classified under ‘Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background’.

### 6.3 Viewing and editing a participant record

To edit a new/existing participant record:

- Search for the participant record of interest, and click on it.
- For a new record where data needs to be edited, start from the ‘Personal Details’ section and work towards ‘Tracked participant details and outcomes’ section (Figure 6.4). For existing records that need editing, look for the section of interest.
- To edit any data (regardless of it being a new or existing record) look for either the ‘edit’ link or the ‘add’ link. This will navigate you to its section, where one can add or edit data, and then submit for saving. Upon entering a new participant, or after clicking on a participant reference on the home page, you will be able to view and edit the participant record. The participant record is in three parts: Personal details, Project participation, and Outcome domains.

**Figure 6.4: Participant Record**

For example if you were to edit the ‘Personal Details’ section of a record, you could click on the blue ‘edit’ link next to ‘Personal Details’ as shown in Figure 6.5:

**Figure 6.5: Participating Record - Editing Personal Details**
Users will be navigated to the Personal Details section of the Participant Record where they will be able to make edits to make changes. This can be seen in Figure 6.6:

**Figure 6.6: Participating Record - Editing Personal Details**

Once changes have been made and the user is satisfied, they can then save the changes by scrolling down the page, and clicking the ‘Save’ button (or they can disregard their changes by clicking the ‘Cancel’ button).

### 6.3.1 Personal details

You may click ‘edit’ next to ‘Personal Details’ to view the participant’s personal details in more detail. You may also add to or edit these details if they have changed as described in 6.2.2 above.

### 6.3.2 Project participation

You may click ‘add’, in the right-most column of the ‘Project Participation’ table, to add a new record of a participant’s involvement in a project within your Ageing Better programme (Figure 6.7).

This brings up a new screen which enables you to enter CMF information on their project participation.

**All questions in this section, including which CMF tool has been administered, must be completed or data will not be captured in reporting to the Fund.**

Please note that for each activity the participant is involved in, you are prompted to give a start and end date. End dates should be completed when this is known (e.g. at exit).
When you have completed your entry, press Submit. You will then be taken back to the participant record page.

You may add as many additional project participation records as you need. Each record should represent engagement with a single project (there should not be multiple records for a single project).

You can also edit an existing project participation record by clicking ‘edit’ in the column to the right of each project participation record.

6.3.3 Tracked participant details and outcomes

This section enables you to add outcome information collected through the full questionnaire as well as adding the participant details that are tracked over time (Figure 6.8). There are separate entries for data collected upon entry to the first project they engage with and at multiple follow-up points thereafter (as described in Section 3.4). Clicking on any of the Entry or Follow Up buttons enables you to create a new record. There is no Closure stage. Not all Follow up stages need to be used.

Firstly you must enter the date of the assessment in the format provided and press submit. This date should be the date at which the data was collected from the participant (not the date of data entry).
Next, click on the name of an outcome domain (e.g. Social isolation and loneliness) to enter the questionnaire data for that domain. After inputting data you can use the following buttons:

- The Close button closes the box and returns the user to the indicators list page (without saving any edits)
- The Close and Save button closes and returns the user to the indicators list page (after saving the edits)
- The Close and return to participant record saves, closes the window and returns the user to the previous page.

The key demonstrates which outcomes domains have no data, saved data and unsaved changes (Figure 6.9)

Figure 6.9: Key
When you have finished entering data press ‘Save’ to ensure your changes have been saved. You may then click on ‘Cancel’ to be returned to the participant record. Saved outcome information can be edited at any time by clicking ‘Edit’ in the Outcome column.

After the outcome data has been entered, you can add data for the tracked indicators by clicking ‘Edit’ in the Tracker Indicator column. The tracked indicators comprise three of the questions from the participant entry questionnaire which may change over time:

- Who do you live with?
- Do you have any long-standing physical or mental illness, or disability?
- Is there anyone who is sick, disabled or needs support whom you look after or give special help to (for example, a relative, wife, husband, partner, child or friend)?

Figure 6.10: Tracked Indicators

6.4 Viewing and editing programme data

To edit Programme Monitoring section:

- You should only see your participating programme listed under the ‘Programme Monitoring’ section once you are logged into the Ageing Better site
- To add/edit this section, click on the name of the programme
- You may now enter data into the relevant section where applicable – by entering figures into the boxes.
Here's an example shown in Figure 6.11:

**Figure 6.11: Programme Monitoring – Editing Programme Details**

Once changes have been made and the user is satisfied, they can then save the changes by scrolling down the page and clicking the ‘Save’ button, or else they can disregard their changes by clicking the ‘Cancel’ button to return to the home page.

### 6.5 How does the data inserted/inputted/provided by users get saved?

Whenever users add/edit/change data, the data provided will only get saved to the database once users have clicked on the ‘Save’ button. In addition, there are other information and colour-coded keys to inform users whether data they have entered is saved or not saved. This applies for each participant record, specifically to the ‘Tracked Participant details and outcome’ section in regards to the outcome and tracked indicators.

An example is provided in Figure 6.12:

**Figure 6.12: Participant Record – Saving Data in Outcome Indicators**
Figure 6.12 shows a list of indicators with a colour-coded key:

- A green background indicating the data provided for these indicators is saved
- A yellow background indicating that the data in ‘Health’ is not saved
- A white background (not shown) represents that no data exists in the indicator.

6.6 Which information must be completed? *(Updated November 2016)*

Some mandatory questions have validation, so they cannot be skipped – see list below. These are principally on the Personal Details and Project Participation screens. Please ensure that this information is routinely being collected. This information can then be updated in real time, as and when it suits.

All questions on the Personal Details page have mandatory validation:

- Please indicate whether the participant was helped to provide data
- What is the participant’s gender?
- Is the participant’s gender the same as registered as birth?
- What is the participant’s year of birth [YYYY]?
- What is the participant’s postcode?
- What is the participant’s ethnicity?
- What is the participant’s religion?
- What is the participant’s sexual orientation?

All questions on the Project Participation page have mandatory validation:

- How is the participant engaged with the programme?
- What CMF tool has been administered?
- What activities is the participant involved in?
- Service Delivery Model
- How did the participant find out about the project?
- Is the participant a formal volunteer? (Please record the number of volunteer hours this participant has contributed)

In addition, depending on the type of questionnaire (CMF tool) used, data collection for certain indicators may be obligatory. On the database, these indicators are marked with a green circle, reflecting required indicators for projects using the full questionnaire (with outcomes) or projects using the short questionnaire (for participant characteristics). This is shown in Figure 6.13.
Figure 6.13: Required Indicators (marked with a green circle)
Annex 1: Research ethics
Research Ethics statement – for Evaluation of Ageing Better, led by the Ecorys UK consortium

Ensuring the highest ethical standards in all the work we do is a core value for Ecorys UK and all the partners working as part of the evaluation consortium. In all our work the consortium members strictly adhere to academic and industry standard procedures to ensure the ethical underpinning of all our work. Specifically, we follow the Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines (SRA)\(^3\), the Government Social Research Unit Code of Practice (GSRU)\(^4\) and the Market Research Society Guidelines (MRS)\(^5\). We also ensure all our staff undertaking research or wider work with children and young people under 18 and vulnerable adults over 18 are DBS checked and cleared. All staff working on projects are provided with external training on research ethics and working with vulnerable children, young people and adults. All research is conducted within Ecorys UK’s Safeguarding Policies for children and young people and vulnerable adults. Ecorys UK’s Statement on Effectively Involving Older People in Research will also be adhered to by all the consortium (copy available).

Ecorys UK has experience of applying for and obtaining ethical approval. Whenever required in the past, we have applied for and obtained ethical clearance through our clients’ own internal ethics structures or procedures. As an independent, employee owned, private company we have sought advice on ethical approval necessary to conduct this evaluation. Our decision is that national ethics committee approval is not required for the survey because the work does not meet the requirements for this.

The research protocol for the evaluation of Ageing Better is being submitted for ethical approval to the Ecorys UK ethics committee. The Ecorys UK ethics committee review research proposals and designs and give an opinion about the proposed participant involvement and whether the research is fair and ethical. The members of the ethics committee are entirely independent of each piece of research that they consider (that is, they are not the client for the work and are not the lead investigator for the work). This enables them to put the research subjects at the centre of their review. Members include a diverse group of senior experienced researchers, consultants and evaluators from across the company. The ethics panel review the applicant’s proposal or research design and provide feedback on the approach. For the evaluation of Ageing Better an external expert, Dr Bernadette Bartlam, Lecturer in Health Services at Keele University is co-opted to the Ecorys UK ethics panel for further external assurance. The full details of the committee and its membership and processes are detailed in the company’s research ethics policy (copy available).

Ecorys UK’s ethics procedure is accompanied by Ecorys UK Board level monitoring of ethics. Ethical issues and the results of applications to the Ecorys UK ethics committee are considered at board level on a monthly basis. It is a standing item on the Ecorys UK board’s agenda and issues referred to the ethics panel from across the business, and the ethics panel’s associated recommendations are noted.

\(^3\) SRA (2003) *Ethical Guidelines*
\(^4\) GRSU (2011) *GSR Professional Guidance: Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government*
\(^5\) MRS (2010) *Code of Conduct*
Annex 2: Proposals for coverage of projects/activities
National Evaluation of the Ageing Better Programme
Common Measurement Framework- Proposals for coverage of projects/activities v3.0

Partnerships are asked to complete this table below as background information in advance of a discussion with the national evaluation team to decide how the CMF will be delivered in each area. We are asking for a list of the projects/activities that the partnership will be carrying out (where known at this time), a general indication of the expected number of participants and proposals regarding whether and how these activities/projects should be covered by the CMF and why.

Note on the implications of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Ethics Approval requirements.
Due to the requirements of the above Act and the arrangements for ethics approval for the national evaluation⁷, participants who lack mental capacity to make a decision to be involved in the research at the time the decision needs to be taken will not be asked to provide data for the Common Measurement Framework. The requirements of the Act are explained in a Code of Practice https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/224660/Mental_Capacity_Act_code_of_practice.pdf. The code states that there should always be a presumption that individuals have the capacity to make decisions unless it can be shown that they lack the capacity to make a decision at the time the decision needs to be taken. This is a matter for partnerships and delivery organisations to determine and Ecorys will agree a suitable protocol with each partnership, taking into account of organisation’s policies, to ensure that data is only requested from individuals able to provide informed consent to providing data for the common measurement framework. Forthcoming guidance on delivering the CMF will signpost partnerships to external advice on relevant ethical issues.

The table below asks for an initial view on whether projects/activities will be covered by the CMF. Where projects are expected to work exclusively with participants who are unable to provide informed consent these projects should be excluded from the CMF.

⁷ Any research with individuals lacking mental capacity requires specific approval from an approved Research Ethics Committee and such approval is not being sought for the Common Measurement Framework.
Partnership name:

Completed by:

Date form was completed:

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<th>Project name/activity name.</th>
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