

Starting a Conversation

getting
it right
for every child

Introduction

The importance of being able to demonstrate outcomes has become an essential element of our work. Recognising effective outcomes helps identify what works well and alternatively, what needs to change. The associated benefits of this approach ensure that;

- There is **motivation** for practitioners and for individuals as progress is viewed as encouraging.
- We develop a clear understanding of the **purpose** of our services.

It helps ensure **efficiency** and **effectiveness** and reduces time spent on inappropriate or unnecessary monitoring.

Understanding Outcomes

Outcomes can be defined as the impact of support on a person's life. We need to separate this from the resources that go into achieving the outcome.

Inputs	The resources you put in to deliver your work e.g. staff time, money, premises.
Processes	This is the step taken before change can be achieved. The assessment, care planning, decision making, monitoring.
Outputs	The services you deliver as part of your work, for example one-to-one support, group work, training, care plan, review minutes.
Outcomes	This is the change which has occurred as a direct result of the outputs, for example social inclusion, engaged in education, fully employed, less anxious, improved relationships, feeling safe and secure.

What are outcomes?

Outcomes are changes, learning or benefits which arise from your work with others. There is a clear distinction between **individual outcomes** and **service outcomes**.

Individual outcomes are determined by the aspirations, goals and priorities of the individual.

An outcome focus can help individuals make changes by providing them with an understanding of the steps they need to take and a way of measuring their progress.

Service outcomes are determined by improvement, change or stability in all aspects of the service.

Maintaining an outcome focus enables the organisation to measure and summarise change across a range of services.

Example : Preparing Life Story Work

Outcomes for the individual

Inputs	Photographs, a book, family tree information, notes on history.
Process	Planned sessions with a child or adult. Visits to key places of importance, interviews with family and key professionals.
Outputs	Development of a coherent 'lifestory', including photographs and notes in order, the completed book, DVD etc
Outcome	Improved sense of identity and origin, understanding of personal history. Readiness to move on.

Outcomes for the service

Inputs	Staff time, skills and practical resources
Process	Dedicated time to plan visits and schedule meetings with identified individuals. Preparation time for sessions with child and adult/carer.
Outputs	All children in long term placements have a life story book.
Outcome	Children are prepared for moving on. Matching process is quicker. Ability to achieve permanence is improved. Placement options are clear.

How to identify Outcomes

Involve people who are interested: practitioners, individuals, volunteers, managers.

Specify the aims of your involvement, as this will help define the outcomes you hope to achieve. (NB It is important to acknowledge that your service outcomes may differ from the individual's desired outcomes)

- e.g.** aim = to support children to improve their educational attainment
outcome = 60% of children improved attendance at school
40% of children have enhanced self-esteem

Developing an Outcome Focus

- Think about an individual at the point of referral or contact. What needs do they have? How do they present?
- Imagine that person once the work is complete and has gone well. How have they changed? What behaviour is different? What is the impact of your involvement?

Short-term outcomes (immediate and up to 3 months) and longer-term outcomes (3 months and beyond) should be considered.

Unplanned outcomes should also be recorded.

For example, an individual may have developed a new relationship which brings positive change. Alternatively, they may become aware that an existing relationship creates unacceptable risk and therefore this may change the desired outcome.

Questions to ask

- How much information do we need?
- Do we need to use a single method to gather information, for example interviews, notes, likert scales, trigger cards, self-assessment, data from outcomes tools etc?
- How can we ensure accuracy?
- How will we analyse the information?
- What information will it be possible to gather?

Monitoring Role

It will be important to establish a baseline against which to compare later information. Outcomes information should be recorded at regular intervals (at initial contact, after 3 months then encapsulated within the review process).

How outcomes information can be used

It is rare that a **single** action will result in a positive outcome. Change occurs for many reasons and there will be many influencing factors.

Individuals and practitioners may interpret an outcome differently and this needs to be set in context to help balance all the elements of the change achieved.

Consider what is available to prove that the change has had an impact. Think about what you have actively contributed and also consider the consequences of the things that have not worked as anticipated.

Questions to ask

- How do services need to change?
- What has been most effective?
- Who do you need to communicate with?
- How can we share success with others?

This can be used to demonstrate progress, and to provide high quality performance information.



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL