



# A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO OUTCOMES TOOLS

**SECOND EDITION**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Outcomes tools are becoming an ever more prominent feature of service provision in the supported housing sector and other areas. Central government departments, inspection bodies, commissioners and service providers themselves are increasingly recognising their value both in promoting and evidencing client change. There are a significant number of tools available but, as far as we are aware, little written material that describes outcomes tools, what they are and how they differ. Choosing the right tool for a particular project or agency can therefore be a difficult job.

The purpose of this document is to help service managers choose a tool that works for them by describing the different types of outcomes tool, their benefits, and what makes a good tool. Whilst it was originally written with homelessness organisations in mind, we believe it will also be helpful to other sectors in which workers support clients in making changes in their lives.

The first edition of this guide and its companion document “Review of Outcome Tools for Homelessness Sector” was published by the London Housing Foundation as part of its ‘Impact through Outcomes Programme’. The second edition of the guide and the updated review of tools are published by Homeless Link who now manage the programme. They are available to download free of charge from [www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk](http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk) and [www.triangleconsulting.co.uk](http://www.triangleconsulting.co.uk)

For more information about resources please see Appendix One

## 1.1 WHAT IS AN OUTCOMES TOOL?

Outcomes tools make it possible to assess the extent to which a service user has changed during the time they have been receiving a service.

It is, of course, possible to assess or describe change without an outcomes tool, but outcomes tools do it in a consistent and standardised way. This makes it possible to draw together information on a number of clients and give an overview of the change being achieved for a whole project or a group of projects.

In order to achieve this the tool usually consists of a number of questions about the client's feelings, attitudes, behaviour, skills and abilities, living situation or relationships or any combination of these. The questions focus on the areas the service intends to help the client change – in other words the intended service outcomes. The questions can take a number of different forms which are described later.

The tool is used with the client at least twice, preferably close to the beginning of their time with the service and then again later once it is reasonable to expect that some changes have taken place. The difference between the first and second readings gives the outcomes for the client at that point in time. The tool can be used more than twice in which case it provides a picture of the client's journey towards the intended outcomes.

Outcomes tools can be used with all clients as an integral part of the key-work process, or they can be used with a sample of clients, or for a limited period of time to provide a snapshot of the changes taking place.

## 1.2 OTHER KINDS OF TOOLS

There are a range of other kinds of tool available to service providers and commissioners. These can sometimes be referred to as outcomes tools even though they in fact serve a different purpose. To avoid confusion these other types of tools are listed in the table below so that the different roles can clearly be seen

Type of Tool	Role	Example
Assessment tool	To get a clear picture of a service user needs	Common Assessment Framework
Management tool	To aid the overall management of the organisation	SWOT analysis
Quality tool	To assess the extent to which a service is following good practice in the way it is managed and delivered	PQASSO
Outcomes Tool	To measure change in service user or other target group	SpiritLevel

### 1.3 WHY USE AN OUTCOMES TOOL?

Using outcomes tools can provide a range of benefits:

Within key-work

- It clarifies and makes explicit for the service user and key-worker what the intended outcomes of the service are and provides a focus on these during the key-work session
- It can provide the service user and key-worker with an overview of the client's situation and, when the tool is used again, a clear sense of where they have or have not made progress
- It offers managers a quick way of taking an overview of a worker's case load, looking at what kind of clients they have and what kind of progress is being made

Within the project or agency

- It enables managers to take an overview of the achievements of a project or group of projects – what is being achieved, what is not being achieved and for who. This can provide a basis for service development and improvement.
- It can be used to demonstrate to funders and other stakeholders what outcomes are being achieved. It can also be used to evidence starting need and highlight particular issues, for example the need for specialist services.

Across the sector

- It offers the possibility of drawing together learning about what kinds of services work for what kinds of clients as a basis for moving towards an evidence based approach to the delivery of services

### 1.4 THE CONTENTS OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is organised into four chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two describes the main ways that outcomes tools differ. Although this material may seem somewhat technical, once mastered it provides a very helpful map of the terrain, enabling the reader to quickly grasp the core features of any tool they might be looking at.

Chapter Three provides guidelines for choosing a tool that meets your needs. There are two aspects to this. The first is finding a tool with core features that fit with your needs. The second is finding a good quality tool. Finally, Chapter Four gives an overview of the things to think about when implementing an outcomes tool.

## 2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TOOLS

This chapter looks at the main ways in which outcomes tools differ from each other. Its primary purpose is to provide a framework for thinking about outcomes tools and ways of comparing them meaningfully with each other.

Outcomes tools vary in a number of ways. The most important differences are:

- The intended purpose of the tool
- The form that the questions take
- Whether it is under-pinned by an explicit journey of change
- The client group it was developed for and the outcome areas it assesses

These four areas are described in turn in the sections below.

### 2.1 THE INTENDED PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

Some outcomes tools are designed primarily to **provide evidence of outcomes** achieved by a service. The benefits they offer are:

- Enabling managers to take an overview of the achievements of a project or group of projects – what is being achieved, what is not being achieved and for who. This can provide a basis for service development and improvement
- Demonstrating to funders and other stakeholders what outcomes are being achieved. It can also be used to evidence starting need and highlight particular issues, for example the need for specialist services
- Offering the possibility of drawing together learning about what kinds of services work for what kinds of clients as a basis for moving towards an evidence based approach to the delivery of services

Some outcomes tools are designed both to **provide evidence of outcomes and to support the key-work process**. In addition to those listed above, these tools offer the additional benefits of:

- Clarifying and making explicit for the service user and key-worker what the intended outcomes of the service are and providing a focus on these during the key-work session
- Providing the service user and key-worker with an overview of the client's situation and, when the tool is used again, a clear sense of where they have or have not made progress
- Offering managers a quick way of taking an overview of a worker's case load, looking at what kind of clients they have and what kind of progress is being made

### 2.2 THE FORM THAT THE QUESTIONS TAKE

The questions used in outcomes tools usually fall into one of these types:

**Concrete questions** about the client's situation at a particular moment in time. For example:

- Is the client registered with a GP?
- Does the client have a support need in relation to drugs and alcohol?
- How many times has the client visited an Accident and Emergency department in the last 6 months?

**Subjective scales** about how the client feels in relation to an area of their life.

The different points on the scale are not precisely defined. For example:

- On a scale of one to five, how satisfied are you with your housing situation, where one is very dissatisfied and five is very satisfied
- I feel confident and motivated: always, often, sometimes, infrequently, never

**Defined scales** about where the client is on a journey of change towards an end outcome. The different points on the journey are defined so that if two clients are both said to be at point three on a scale of one - ten that implies that they have achieved the same landmark(s) on the journey. The following example is taken from a tool called Measuring Change which was developed by Carr Gomm. The scale is called 'living with different types of people'.

I am happy being with people who are different to me. If they have different customs or ways of thinking and behaving, I respect this and try to understand the differences. I never use disrespectful language.
I am getting on pretty well with different people, although I still sometimes feel a little bit uncomfortable with them. I understand about their rights and that it's OK if people are different to me. I hardly ever use disrespectful language.
I am beginning to feel more comfortable with different people, but I still usually choose to be with people who are like me. I don't use disrespectful language as much as I used to.
I can sometimes be with people who are different to me, but I don't feel comfortable with them and I avoid them if I can. I understand the need to change the way I talk about people who are different to me.
I don't like having to be with people who are different to me. Other people have said they don't like the way I talk about people who are different to me. (The way I talk about them is not respectful.)

Most tools contain just one of these question types but it is possible to include more than one.

### 2.3 IS THERE AN EXPLICIT JOURNEY OF CHANGE?

Tools using defined scales have to describe the different points on the journey towards the desired end outcome. Some tools base these descriptions on worker and client experience of what the steps tend to be. Other tools draw on worker and client experience to develop an explicit model of the steps involved in the change process. The definitions of different points on the journey are then based on this model of change.

This provides a consistency across scales and an overall coherence that is absent in tools which are not based on an explicit journey of change. It can also support clients in moving along their journey by drawing attention to the particular benefits and challenges of each stage of the journey and helping them have a sense of what to expect.

The journey of change underpinning a number of versions of the Outcomes Star<sup>1</sup> is as follows:

#### **Stuck**

- 1 At the beginning of the journey we are not interested in thinking about or discussing this aspect of our lives. Although we are far from achieving our full potential and may be causing harm to ourselves or others, we are cut off and not aware of problems, or unwilling to talk about them out of fear or mistrust. Because of this we are stuck
- 2 The first sign of the possibility of change is present when we feel fed up with how things are. This may be fleeting and we probably won't engage with workers in any real or meaningful way

<sup>1</sup> The wording of this journey is copyrighted. It can be reproduced as long as the source is acknowledged but it cannot be amended. For more information about copyright for the Outcomes Star see [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

### **Accepting help**

- 3 The feeling that we don't like how things are gets stronger and now we really want things to be different. Change may seem impossible or frightening and we may not know what we want, but we know we don't want to carry on living as we have been. At this point we will meet workers or others offering help and accept their help with pressing problems, though our willingness or ability to do this may come and go.
- 4 Now we start to engage with help in a more consistent way, talking things through with workers and going along with the actions that are agreed. However, we do not take the initiative and rely on others for change. Without workers driving the process we can slip back quickly and may feel critical of workers if things don't work out.

### **Believing**

- 5 Now for the first time we start to really believe that things could be different in this area of our life. We get a sense of what it is we want – what we are moving towards as well as what we are moving away from. We can see that change won't happen unless we help to make it happen. This is a change in the way we view things. There is a sense of being engaged rather than just going along with other people's plans.
- 6 We start to build on this belief by doing things differently in the world. We are experimenting, trying out new ways of doing things. Sometimes things work, sometimes they don't so it's a difficult stage to be in and we need a lot of support to ride the highs and lows and keep the belief going.

### **Learning**

- 7 The experimenting leads to learning and we start to get a sense of what works for us in moving towards our goal in this area of our life. This is really motivating and helps to strengthen our belief in ourselves and our ability to achieve our goals. For this reason we start to become more consistent in doing things that are helpful for our journey and get us closer to where we want to be. However we still need quite a lot of support to keep things going and without it set backs can knock us off course
- 8 With support we overcome some setbacks and learn more about what helps to keep us on course in times of difficulty. However dealing with difficulties is quite challenging and it can be tempting to give up and go back to the old ways of doing things. It helps to have someone to talk to about how we are managing things to help us recognise what we have learnt

### **Self-reliance**

- 9 Our new ways of doing things in this area of our life are now quite well established and feel more natural or automatic. Most of the time we can maintain the changes on our own without support but at times of crisis we are vulnerable to slipping back and so it can be helpful to have someone who checks that all is well and helps us to recognise the danger signs and take action when necessary
- 10 We have no issues in this area and behave in ways that work well for us and those around us. We don't need any outside help to maintain this way of doing things. We know when we need support and know how to get it.

## **2.4 CLIENT GROUP AND OUTCOME AREAS**

Most tools are developed with a particular client group (or groups) in mind. For example the Recovery Star, the mental health version of the Outcomes Star, was developed for people with

mental health issues. However many tools are applicable to other client groups as well. In supported housing settings and other services which are working to help people change, the intended outcomes tend to fall into the following areas (not all tools include all these areas and they may be described differently in different tools.)

Motivation  
Self-esteem  
Mental Health  
Physical Health  
Addiction  
Offending  
Personal Safety  
Relationships/Social Networks

Use of  
time/training/employment/hobbies  
Managing Money  
Managing Accommodation  
Literacy and Numeracy



## 3. CHOOSING A TOOL THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

There are two things to consider when choosing an outcomes tool. The first is whether the tool meets your particular needs. The second is whether the tool is a good outcomes tool.

Section 3.1 below addresses the issue of whether the tool is suitable for your organisation. Section 3.2 addresses the question of what makes for a good outcomes tool.

### 3.1 FIT WITH YOUR NEEDS

There are four questions to consider when looking for an outcomes tool that fits the needs of your organisation or project:

- What your primary purpose is in using an outcomes tool
- Which outcome areas you need the tool to cover
- Whether to use a generalist tool that is applicable to a wide variety of client groups or a specialist tool that is specifically tailored to the needs of one client group
- Whether to use an off the shelf tool or develop your own bespoke tool

These are examined in turn below.

#### 3.1.1 Purpose in using the tool

As described in section 2.1, outcomes tools can service different purposes.

Some outcomes tools are designed primarily to **provide evidence of outcomes** achieved by a service. These tools are not designed to be used as an integral part of key-work and so are usually less helpful in this area. Some tools are designed to **both provide evidence of outcomes and support the key-work process**. The first thing to do when selecting a tool is to determine your purpose in using the tool. Then you can select a tool that is suitable for this.

#### 3.1.2 Outcome areas covered by the tool

The next thing to do is to identify what outcomes you want to measure. This is likely to be the same as the intended outcomes for the project. Then you can identify a tool which measures all of these outcomes.

For help determining what outcomes you want to measure, see [www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk](http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk).

#### 3.1.3 Generalist or specialist tool

Having decided on your primary purpose in using the tool and the outcomes you need to measure, the next thing to think about is whether you want a generalist or a specialist tool. Generalist tools can be used with a wide range of client groups. Specialist tools have very specific questions that would only be relevant to the client group that they were developed for. In an organisation which works with a range of different client groups there are a number of different options:

1. Use a generic tool with all client groups
2. Use different tools for different client groups
3. Use one tool but modify it where necessary to take account of differences between client groups.

In most cases we recommend the third option as it allows for consistency across services whilst taking into account important differences between client groups.

### 3.1.4 Off the shelf or bespoke tool

Finally, you need to consider whether you want to use an existing tool or develop your own. Although different service providers may offer different services and work in different ways with different clients, the outcomes they are aiming to achieve are often surprisingly similar. It is well worth reviewing the tools that are available already before developing your own. The advantages of using an off the shelf tool are:

- Developing a good tool takes considerable time and investment. The better tools have been tested, reviewed and tested again many times in order to achieve something that works well for clients and offers meaningful outcomes information
- An existing tool may have guidelines, a training package and/or IT package to support it
- If you use a tried and tested tool it may have more credibility with funders. They may also prefer it because they are already familiar with it and therefore it is easier for them to understand the outcomes information you collect
- If you use a tool that other agencies are using you may be able to share findings and learning more easily with other organisations.

The advantage of developing your own tool are that

- The process of engaging staff and clients in thinking about intended outcomes and how they can be evidenced helps to build an outcomes orientation within the agency which can be very energising
- You end up with something exactly tailored to your service

To make the most of the benefits both of using an existing tool and developing your own, we recommend using an existing tool where possible and engaging staff and clients in thinking about the outcomes of their service as part of the process of implementation. Alternatively some tools (such as Bridges to Progress) allow services to tailor the tool to their specific project.

## 3.2 WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTCOMES TOOL?

Once you have decided which type of tool you need, you can then concentrate on how well it does the job. The material in this section is presented under three headings:

- Things to look for in all tools
- Special considerations for supporting key-work
- Special considerations for evidencing service outcomes

These sections provide guidance on things to look out for. The companion document **“Review of Outcomes Tools for the Homelessness Sector”** describes five point scales for a number of these aspects. These scales provide more detail on what, in our view, constitutes a good outcomes tool.

### 3.2.1 Things to look for in all tools

#### A thorough process of development and testing

Outcomes tools take time to develop and perfect. Even with the best background research, it is not until the tool is actually in use that it is possible to know how well it works with clients, and how useful the outcomes data it provides is for identifying the successes and failures within a service. Ideally the development should involve:

- Consultation with front-line workers and clients about the intended outcomes of the services in which the tool is to be used, landmarks in the journey towards these outcomes and the observable behaviours which indicate progress on the journey
- Consultation with managers and possibly funders regarding the information they require to assess and manage the services
- The development of a draft tool
- Piloting with all the types of service and client groups that the tool is intended to be used with, and modifications to the tool based on the pilot feedback
- Research to demonstrate the reliability of the data
- Ideally the tool should also be validated by comparing its results to those of previously validated tools. However, where there is no existing tool this is not possible
- At least two further years of use with further reviews and modifications taking place within that time.

### **Speed and ease of use**

It is important that the outcomes tool does not take too long and is not onerous to complete for the worker or the client – otherwise it is not likely to be feasible to use as it will distract too much from the delivery of the service. What constitutes ‘too long’ will depend on the nature of the service. Those services which retain clients for longer and have higher levels of client-worker contact are likely to be able to invest more time in outcomes monitoring.

### **Support materials on implementation and use**

For many tools the quality of the data and the level of improvement that can be expected through its use are very dependent on how well the tool is implemented and the level of skill of the workers using it. For this reason the availability of back-up resources is an important consideration. Tools vary considerably in the amount of back-up support available. The main resources that can be provided are:

- Training: some agencies offer training for key-worker/researchers in using their tool and/or for managers in implementing the tool throughout the organisation
- Manuals: written guides on how to use the tool, analyse and interpret the data
- IT: some tools come with IT packages. Some just analyse data across clients and give the overall results for a project or group of projects. In addition to this some enable clients or workers to complete the tool on-line and give an instant summary of the score – often in a graphic form
- Other: some tools include modifications for different client groups. These may be changes to the outcome areas measured or to the way the tool is used – for example a Braille version for clients with visual impairment. Some tools come with benchmark data from other users which can help managers to interpret their own results.

### **Affordability**

Some tools are available entirely free of charge. Others charge for use in a variety of ways:

- By requiring that staff attend a training course (though they may supply the tool itself for free)
- By charging a one-off fee for the tool
- By charging a fee per client using the tool

### **3.2.2 Special considerations relating to supporting key-work**

As well as the general considerations described above, it is also necessary to consider the following if it is important to you that the tool is effective in supporting key-work.

#### **Client-friendly language and presentation**

Is the material presented in a way that is accessible to your client group? In general the tool should have clear and straightforward instructions and the language should be in plain English, avoiding professional jargon. There may also be special considerations for your particular client group – eg if they have learning disabilities or visual impairment. Some tools can be completed on-line which can offer benefits such as spoken instruction and more engaging visual presentation which can be important for some client groups.

#### **Visual summary of results**

When the client has completed the tool, is there a visual summary which provides an at a glance overview of where the client is in relation to all the different outcome areas covered by the tool? This can help both client and key-worker to pinpoint areas of strength and issues to be addressed. It can also be very helpful when the tool is used a second time in giving a clear picture of change. When there is an IT package which enables this summary to be produced on screen it can make using the tool even more engaging for the client.

#### **Direct link with action-planning**

Does the tool link easily with action-planning within key-work? Ideally the outcome areas measured by the tool would be the same areas that the key-worker and client will be focusing on in action-planning. Having used the tool to identify the client's current position in relation to each area, key-worker and client could then identify priorities for action. This could include agreeing where the client would like to be on the scale in a few weeks' or months' time and agreeing the actions needed to get them there.

#### **Explicit journey of change**

If the tool uses defined scales then are the scale point definitions underpinned by an explicit journey of change which is consistently applied to all the outcome areas? Defined scales are those on which the client or worker is invited to place the client on a scale (e.g. 1-10) and the different positions on that scale are defined in terms of the attitudes and behaviours the client would show at that point.

Tools based on an explicit journey of change are more likely to have scales which identify key landmarks on the client journey in a clear and consistent way. This has two advantages. Firstly it makes them more powerful as key-work tools because they help clients to understand the change process they are engaged in and the particular challenges and rewards of different stages in the journey. Secondly, it can make the tool more reliable in terms of the outcomes information provided because when it is difficult to identify where the client should be placed on a scale, the journey of change helps to pinpoint where the client is in relation to that aspect of their life.

### **3.2.3 Special considerations relating to evidencing service outcomes**

The considerations here all relate to the quality of the data that the tool will produce.

#### **Meaningfulness of data**

If the tool tells us that a client has a particular score for a particular outcome (eg they score three on self-care and living skills), do we know what this means in terms of the behaviour and attitudes and skills the client shows? If the tool is based on a set of

subjective scales the answer will be no. If the tool is based on a defined scale or a set of concrete questions, then the answer will be yes.

**Reliability of data**

If the tool was used by a number of different members of staff, would it give the same results? Tools based on concrete questions are likely to be the most reliable.

Defined scales which are underpinned by a theory of change are likely to be more reliable than those which are not.

**Sensitivity of data**

If a client makes an important change will it register on the tool? Scales of 1-3 or even 1-5 are not very sensitive. Scales of 1-10 are reasonably sensitive, yet it is still possible for clients to take a step forward that would not register on the scale. Scales developed specifically for a particular type of project are likely to be more sensitive than scales developed to cover a wide range of projects.

## 4. IMPLEMENTING AN OUTCOMES TOOL

If you are planning to use an outcomes tool as a regular part of your key-work process, it is important that the tool is integrated with your agency's systems and ways of working. The agencies that have participated in the London Housing Foundation's 'Impact through Outcomes' programme have found that using an outcomes tool has had a bigger impact on service delivery than originally imagined, both in terms of the changes to practice and the benefits received.

The key areas that require attention are:

- Creating an outcomes orientation within the agency
- Integration with key-working (and training)
- Integration with IT systems
- Integration with performance management systems

Many tools will include guidelines on these issues and may come with training packages, IT systems and report formats. The following are general guidelines which apply to all tools designed to be used as an integral part of key-work.

### 4.1 CREATING AN OUTCOMES ORIENTATION WITHIN THE AGENCY

Measuring the outcomes of a service should, ideally, be part of a wider shift of focus away from the service and how it is delivered, and onto the client and what is being achieved for them. The shift from service focus to client focus is summarised in the table below.

Service-focused	Client focused
focus on service deliverer	focus on client
focus on how you deliver service	focus on how client changes
focus on quality of services	focus on effectiveness of services
emphasis on improving quality	emphasis on improving effectiveness
measure amount of what you do	measure benefit of what you do
evidence of activities (weak case with funders)	evidence of results (strong case with funders)
the task is never finished (demotivating for staff)	clients achieve goals ( motivating for staff and clients)
service specified in terms of what is offered	service specified in terms of client need and intended outcome

Without this shift of focus, the outcomes tool may be just another form that is filled in mechanically because it is required. If implemented in this mechanistic way the many potential benefits of using an outcomes tool (described in sections 1.2 and 2.1) will not be realised.

To achieve this change of emphasis, a number of elements need to be in place:

- The explicit intention to make this change of orientation happens at chief executive and senior management level
- A clear plan of action to create this change including the introduction of an outcomes tool and regular updates to the plan as actions are carried out and reviewed
- A managed process of implementation of the tool in which it is introduced, piloted, reviewed and changes to the tool or the way it is used made in the light of the findings of the pilot.

## 4.2 INTEGRATION INTO KEY-WORKING

As well as the wider shift in orientation within the agency, it is important that use of the tool is integrated within the key-work process. This involves a number of different elements:

**Training:** it is important that workers understand why an outcomes tool is being introduced into an organisation and how it fits within the wider context of taking a client focused approach. This includes understanding what the benefits will be and how the information collected will be used so that they are motivated to use the tool well. Many outcomes tools require that workers are trained before using it with clients. As the tool will be used as an integral part of key-work, it is desirable that training in its use is incorporated into other aspects of key-working training. However it is likely that in the short-term separate training will be required.

**Paperwork:** the outcomes tool may overlap with some of the existing paperwork which key-workers complete – for example key-work recording sheets, review sheets and action plans. When introducing an outcomes tool it is important to review paperwork and amalgamate forms where possible to avoid duplication.

**Supervision:** outcomes tools can play a useful role in supervision and team meetings in a number of ways:

- Managers can get a quick overview of a worker's caseload by reviewing clients' scores on the tool
- The tool can provide an easy reference point when discussing client needs and progress
- Managers can ensure consistent and reliable use of tools by reviewing how clients have been scored during supervision.

## 4.3 INTEGRATION WITH I.T. SYSTEMS

In order to draw together the data from individual outcomes tools to build a picture of the achievements of a project or group of projects, it is essential that the data is entered on a spreadsheet or database. Ideally this would be a database which also records other information about clients' characteristics and the services clients are receiving. Some tools such as the Outcomes Star and TOP have databases available for this purpose and in some cases they can be integrated with existing client management systems.

Many agencies have found establishing IT systems to support the use of outcomes tools challenging and we therefore recommend that you give this aspect of implementation consideration at an early stage in the process and draw on the learning and experience of other agencies before deciding how to proceed.

## 4.4 INTEGRATION WITH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

We recommend that standard reports are designed for the IT system so that project managers and senior managers can receive regular updates on the outcomes that their project or group of projects are achieving. This data can be invaluable for learning about how well different aspects of an agency's work are doing and can then be used as a basis for service improvement. Once the data has been collected and analysed on a regular basis for some time, it may be possible to establish benchmarks for performance in some areas.

We also recommend that the data is analysed in a more comprehensive way on a less regular basis (e.g. once every 1-3 years) in order to identify links between client

characteristics or interventions and outcomes and to compare performance between different projects.

Homeless Link has published good practice in this area which is available on [www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk](http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk)



# APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES

## HOMELESSNESS

Homeless Link runs a programme to support homelessness organisations in taking an outcomes approach. The programme was originally funded by the London Housing Foundation and has led to the development of a range of resources including a review of tools for homelessness. This provides a detailed description and evaluation of twenty-six tools with relevance to the homelessness field (and wider) and is entitled 'Review of Outcomes Tools for the Homelessness Sector'. This and other resources are available on [www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk](http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk).

The material on this site is relevant to those seeking to measure outcomes in many other settings, particularly those in which services are provided directly to clients.

## ALL SECTORS

Toynbee Hall has published a review of outcome tools. It is wider in scope than the 'Review of Outcomes Tools for Homelessness Sector' listed above and includes sections on: Health and Wellbeing; Mental Health; Young People, wellbeing, and self-esteem; Addiction, drugs and alcohol. It is free to download from their website [www.toynbeehall.org.uk](http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk) (under 'Evaluation and Research' in the 'What we do' page).

The Outcomes Star is a family of tools for measuring and promoting change when working with vulnerable people. There are versions for different client groups including homelessness, mental health, teenagers, work and training, and alcohol and drugs. All versions can be downloaded free of charge on [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

## ADVICE SETTINGS

Citizens Advice Bureau has put together a toolkit for advice services on outcomes. This is a very comprehensive resource which includes questionnaires for use in the evaluation of advice services and guidelines on how to prepare a report to demonstrate the cost benefits of a particular service. The toolkit is available on CD Rom. For more information contact [tamsin.lawson@citizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:tamsin.lawson@citizensadvice.org.uk)

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The New Economics Foundation has put together an extensive resource on the measurement of outcomes within social enterprises. The resource includes a compendium of the various tools that are available in this area. [www.proveandimprove.org](http://www.proveandimprove.org)

## MENTAL HEALTH

The Department of Health has published a review of outcomes tools for mental health. This can be downloaded at [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_093316](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_093316)