

Reshaping Care and Support Planning

Recording outcomes and using information



Recording outcomes: the link between engagement and improvement

Recording is an essential task in human services. It helps to focus the work of staff and supports effective partnership with people who use services. It ensures that there is a documented account of work undertaken. It supports continuity when there is a change of staff and provides a means for managers to monitor work. It becomes a major source of evidence when there are critical incidents or enquiries. Recording is also necessary for planning, monitoring and reviewing progress, at individual, service, organisational and locality levels.

Over the past five years in Scotland, work has progressed on developing an approach to outcomes based working called Talking Points. Recording has been identified as one of three key elements essential to maximising the benefits of an outcomes approach. The diagram below shows the interactivity between the three key elements, which will form the three key sections of this report:

- **outcomes focused engagement (to develop, implement and monitor an individual plan)**
- **the recording of the outcomes following assessment and planning and review**
- **the use of that collated information for a range of purposes including planning, commissioning, accountability and performance improvement**

The relationship between the three elements is not linear, but is best understood as a circuit. To complete the circuit, the collated information can be reported back to staff who gain improved understanding of how they influence outcomes, and how the information can be used to improve services, which in turn can improve recording.

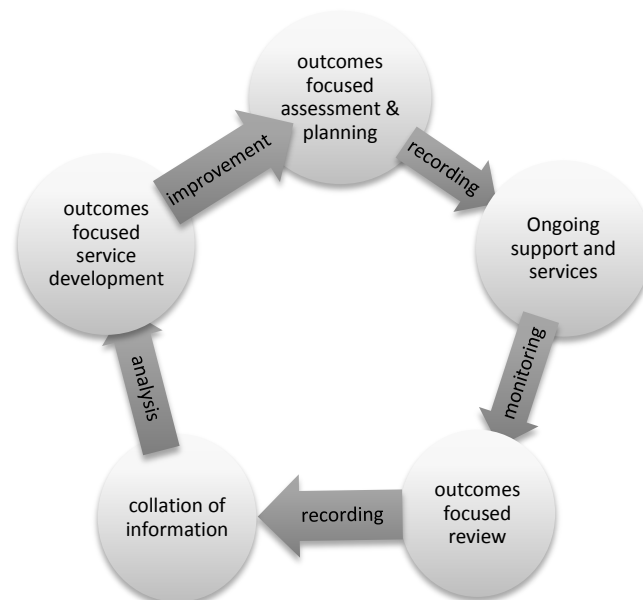


Figure 1: Recording as a critical link in outcomes based working

In order to get good information on outcomes, it is essential that staff are clear about how outcomes should be recorded. This may vary from one organisation to another but problems with recording outcomes tend to be similar across different organisations. The examples on the next two pages demonstrate common errors in recording and provide alternative examples.

Tracking outcomes through assessment, planning and review – Ken



The outcome example here – family contact - is taken from Ken, a fictional character central to the Reshaping Care and Support Planning online resource, and shows how an outcome can be tracked through assessment, planning and review.

Assessment

Family
Ken was struggling to manage at home for many months after his wife died. Ken's remaining family consists of his son Alistair who is married to Karen. The couple live in Australia with their two young children. Although Alistair was recently preoccupied with his own business and the two young children, he has been very concerned about his dad being in hospital twice in recent months, and is very keen to maintain contact with his dad

Personal Plan

What matter to Ken (outcomes)	How	Who
Keeping in touch with family	Email and mobile calls with family in Australia	Ken will arrange phonecalls supported with emails by Jeanette and Sean

Review

Ken's view		
What is working?	What is not working?	What needs to happen?
<i>Keeping in touch with family:</i> Ken is delighted to be in contact with his family and appreciates the help from staff to make sure this happens	Ken does not like staff reading his emails from his son.	Ken's son is buying him an ipad to make it easier to communicate directly and privately. They are also going to skype every Sunday (add to personal plan)
Ken is delighted that his son and family are visiting in Autumn.	Ken ran up his mobile bill through phoning Alistair when he had 'wobbly moments' on moving in	Alistair is paying this bill off and communication will be easier and cheaper with the ipad

Identified issues with current recording of outcomes, and alternatives

In order to get good information on outcomes, it is essential that staff are clear about recording outcomes. The examples on the next two pages demonstrate common errors in recording and provide alternative examples.

Outcomes too high level/general: Mr Jones wants to improve his health and wellbeing

Outcomes are sometimes recorded in a very general way, referring to an overall category such as the individual wanting to feel safer or to feel healthier. To make the outcome meaningful, it needs to be expressed in a way that means something to the person. What is it about the outcome that is important to the person, and what is it they are hoping for or would like to change?

Outcome category	Intended outcome	Action	Who by	Timescale
Health and wellbeing	Mr Jones wants to reduce his anxiety about his asthma and avoid being readmitted to hospital	Read 'Breathe Easy' literature	Mr Jones	By next appt in two weeks
		Make referral to support group	District Nurse Sarah Green	By Friday

Outputs not outcomes: Anne Smith is being referred to supported employment

In a system which has been service led for many years, there is a tendency to link the individual's circumstances to a pre-determined set of service solutions. One of the biggest challenges is to identify what is important to the person, or what they hope for, and then work backwards to identify how everyone can work towards achieving that outcome, which may or may not involve a service

Outcome category	Intended outcome	Action	Who by	Timescale
Develop confidence and skills	Anne Smith wants to obtain computing skills to build her confidence to get back to work	Get start dates of next Bright Sparks course and make referral	Social worker Jim Traynor	By next week
		Ask Anne's son for support at home	Anne	By next week

Unachievable outcomes: Mrs T urgently wants to obtain a tenancy in the popular Pine Court

Identifying outcomes can involve negotiation. Even when staff are aware that the ideal expressed by the service user is unrealistic, it may be possible to take steps towards it, or identify an alternative

Outcome category	Intended outcome	Action	Who by	Timescale
Living where you want	Mrs T wants to move to a quieter area nearer her sister, and would ideally like to live in Pine Court	Apply to Pine Court as a long term goal, and also Cedar Court	Mrs T with support worker	Apply before the end of the month
Seeing people	Mrs T would like to see her sister every week	Can community transport help	Support worker	This week

Lack of specificity: Contact with Mr Gordon will be ongoing

Plans are more likely to be enacted where there is a clear sense not just of *why* things should happen (outcome) but also if there is some detail about *who* will take *what* action, *when*

Outcome Category	Intended outcome	Action	Who by	Timescale
Seeing people	Gordon wants to address his anger management to improve relationships with his family	Gordon and social worker to work on anger management strategies	Sam Smith	Fortnightly for the next two months, then review

Goals rather than outcomes: Mr Mohammed will walk from the bedroom to the bathroom unaided

A lot of existing work in health and social care involves goal setting, which can be a successful way of working in its own right. However, outcomes take the sense of purpose to a different level, in identifying the overall direction. The goals are steps towards achieving the outcome.

Outcome category	Intended outcome	Action	Who by	Timescale
Mobility	Mr Mohammed wants to be able to walk around indoors unaided, so that he can look after his wife again	Initial focus on walking between the bedroom to the bathroom	Physiotherapist Susan Strong	Twice weekly for the next month, then review