



Careers Star™

The Outcomes Star for people caring for others

“ People really open up and sometimes it leads to whole new conversations

“ Service users really enjoyed the interaction – and there were statistical results!

“ I could feed back to my head office some really impressive results

... has made the support plans more imaginative and more individual

“ The Outcomes Star is an invaluable tool for our sector

“ Support is more systematic and structured

... e to ... l, even ... is needed

“ We have incorporated it into assessment and three monthly reviews

“ It helps identify training needs for staff and volunteers

... or ...

“ We can now assist clients better - we love the Star!

“ Some people can't understand written reports, but can understand this

“ The Star is collaborative, rather than something that is done to people

“ It enables a clear direction for collaborating with a client

... olistic approach ... l direction to the ... port

“ The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and in some cases life changing

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Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to enquire about buying a licence and training.

Licences are also available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages.

The Outcomes Star™

This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of the Outcomes Star over its long evolution and we would like to thank all the clients, workers, managers, funders, academics and commissioners who have generously given their time and expertise.

The original commission for an outcome measurement system came from St Mungo's, with financial support from the London Housing Foundation, and Triangle recognises their vital roles in the development of the Outcomes Star. We would also like to acknowledge Kate Graham's important contribution to the development of the suite of Stars, both as a founding partner of Triangle and as co-author of the original Outcomes Star (now called the Outcomes Star for Homelessness).

We would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to this version of the Star:

- Social Enterprise in East Lothian (SEEL) and Haldane Associates, for initiating the Carers Star and collaborating on the pilot version
- Carers Trust, for collaborating with Triangle to pilot, revise, finalise and publish the Carers Star and for supporting their members to use it effectively
- The Scottish government, for providing SEEL with support from the Change Fund to collaborate on developing the pilot version of the Carers Star; and the Big Lottery Fund, for support associated with Carers Trust collaboration.
- All the Carers Trust network partners that participated in piloting the Carers Star and provided feedback, including Blackburn with Darwen Carers Centre, Care for the Carers, Carers of East Lothian, Carers First, Carers Support Centre Bristol and South Gloucestershire, Carers Trust Cambridgeshire, Cheshire Carers Centre, Crossroads Care Bury, Herefordshire Carers Support, Lifecraft, Manchester Carers Centre, South Lakeland Carers, St Helens Carers Centre, Swindon Carers Centre, West Lancashire Carers Centre, Worcestershire Association of Carers, York Carers Centre.

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Contents

Introduction	4
Introduction to the Carers Star	4
Carers Star resources	6
Theoretical foundations	8
Fit with the Carer's Assessment and other processes	9
How the Carers Star was developed	10
The pilot process and findings	11
Part 1: Implementing the Carers Star™ in your project	14
1 Review your reasons for introducing the Carers Star	14
2 Check that the Carers Star is suitable for you	15
3 Run a pilot – try it out	15
4 Integrate the Carers Star into your ways of working, paperwork and IT	16
5 Train staff to use the Carers Star	17
6 Ensure quality and consistency in the use of the Carers Star	18
7 Analyse and interpret the data	18
8 Share and act on the learning	21
Part 2: Guidance for Workers – the Carers Star™ as an integral part of work with carers	23
1 Before you use the Carers Star	23
2 Set-up, context and introduction of the Star	24
3 Discussing and completing the Carers Star	25
4 Using the completed Star Chart to agree actions and next steps	27
5 Revisiting the Star at reviews	29
6 Frequently asked questions	30

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Introduction

Introduction to the Carers Star™

The Carers Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a suite of tools for supporting and measuring change when working directly with people.

The Star is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change made by a range of people with different needs. It is also a keywork and coaching tool that can help people make changes by providing them with a clear picture of the journey they need to take, enabling them to take manageable steps and plotting their progress along the way.

The original version of the Outcomes Star was developed for the homelessness sector, and tailored versions are now available for a wide range of client groups including parents, people with learning disabilities and women experiencing domestic abuse. For further information please visit the Outcomes Star website – www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

The Carers Star has been developed for use with a wide range of carers¹, both full-time and part-time. It covers seven key areas:

1. Health
2. The caring role
3. Managing at home
4. Time for yourself
5. How you feel
6. Finances
7. Work.

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¹ 'Carer' can refer to anyone who is providing unpaid care for a relative or other person, full- or part-time, whether they live with the person they care for or not. It can include young carers, but is primarily designed for adult carers. Services may find My Star for children and young people is a better match for carers under 18.

The Journey of Change

The Carers Star is underpinned by a model of change that has five stages:

1. At the first stage there is **cause for concern** because the situation could put either the carer or the person they care for at risk. Perhaps the carer cannot manage and the situation may be about to break down. No one is offering them the support they need, or support is on offer but the carer does not trust or accept it. They may not see the extent of the problem or they may be worried about what might happen if they acknowledge how hard things have become.
2. The first step forward happens when the carer starts **getting help**. At this stage someone is helping them talk about what is going on and what support they need. Things may be very difficult but any severe and immediate risks are being addressed. They may feel anxious and upset about needing help, or doubt that it will do any good, but at this stage they are not facing the future alone.
3. This stage is when the carer starts **making changes** and taking the initiative. At this stage, a lot of improvements are needed and things are still difficult. Some of the new approaches they try may not work, so their motivation and confidence may take a knock. The carer may sometimes feel exhausted or unable to carry on, or the support they have might not be right for them, but they are exploring their options and trying things out.
4. At this stage the carer is **finding what works**, with support from a service. More needs to change in order for them to stay as well as possible or to improve their quality of life, while caring effectively, but they have made some important changes. They are getting much of the support they need and finding what works for them.
5. This stage is when the carer's situation is **as good as it can be**. They have the support they need in place and they are maintaining or even improving their own well-being while caring effectively. Every carer's experience is different, so perhaps life still feels hard and they wish they were not in this situation, or perhaps they mostly feel content. Workers can be confident that for now the carer has what they need and requires no additional specialist support.

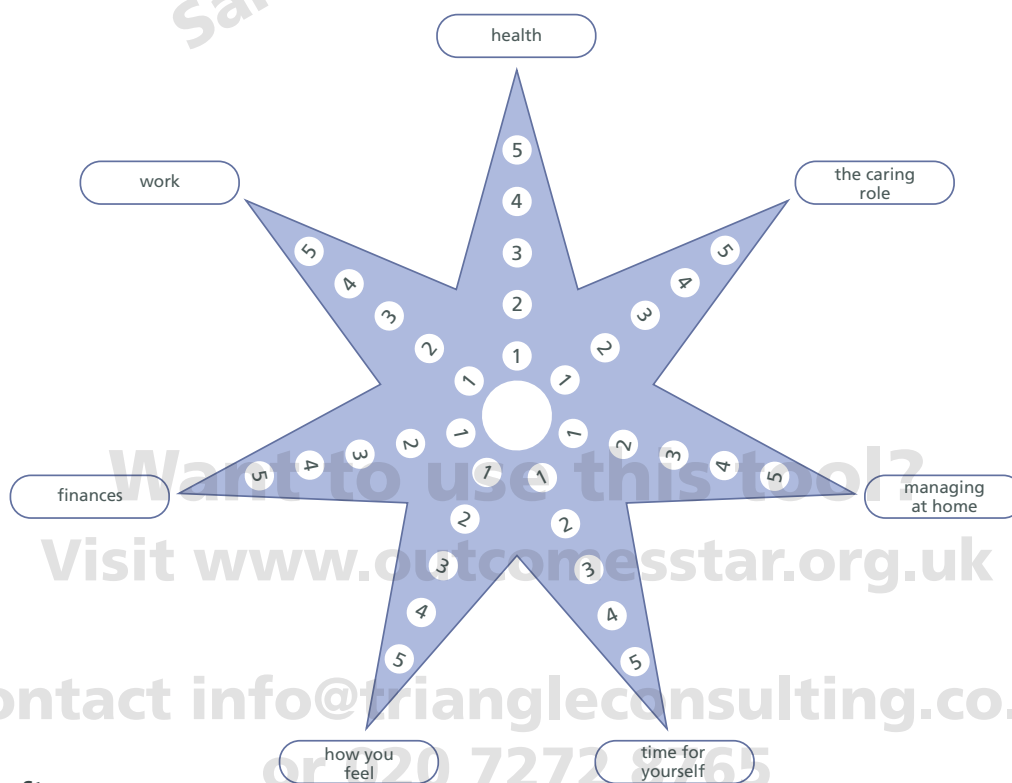


Figure 1: The Carers Star

Carers Star™ resources

There is a range of resources available to help services use the Carers Star effectively.

Carers Star™ Chart and Action Plan

The Star Chart and Action Plan is a four-page document including the Star Chart – on which the Star reading is marked – a space for notes, and a simple action plan for carers. Organisations will need one for each carer when using the Star on paper.

Carers Star™ scales

This document consists of short descriptions of the scale points to help carers discuss and complete their Star with the worker.

The Star Online

The Carers Star is available online via an intuitive web application called the Star Online. This application allows users to complete the Star with carers on screen. It incorporates the scales and guidance for workers and carers and is available as a mobile-enabled version for use on smartphones. Alternatively, the Star Online can be used in conjunction with paper versions of the Star. Workers and carers can complete the Star on paper and input the reading online later.

The Star Online web application enables organisations to analyse and report on the outcomes data staff have added to the system, and to compare their outcomes with averages for similar services and client groups. It is available to organisations using the Carers Star for an annual licence fee based on the number of workers using the Star.

For more information on the Carers Star Online, go to www.staronline.org.uk. You can also sign up for a free 30-day free trial.

Training and consultancy

In order to buy a Star Licence and use the Carers Star, workers need training from Triangle or a Licensed Trainer. Triangle provides a range of consultancy support and in-house training courses, and runs a licensed trainer scheme for those wanting to cascade training within their service. For further details, please visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk or email training@triangleconsulting.co.uk. Most organisations can also benefit from consultancy support with the implementation process.

It gave me a good way of gaining lots of relevant information about the carer's situation and what she needed support with.

Carer support worker

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This Organisation Guide

The remainder of this introduction presents the theoretical foundations and development process of the Carers Star.

Part one is for those in a management role and provides guidance and good practice examples in implementing the Carers Star across a project.

Part two presents guidance for workers using the Carers Star with carers.

Outcomes Star™ website

The Outcomes Star website – www.outcomesstar.org.uk – contains information about all versions of the Star, along with supporting information. Specific areas covered by the website include:

- How the Star was developed
- Research and validation on the Star
- What people say about using the Star
- Good practice on implementation
- Use of Outcomes Star data for outcome measurement
- Use of the Star as a keywork tool
- Information for commissioners on using the Star.

Not for use
Sample for information only

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Theoretical foundations

Values and assumptions underpinning the Outcomes Star™ and the Carers Star™ in particular

New approach

The approach underpinning the Outcomes Star family of tools is, we believe, an original approach to assessment and outcomes measurement. It can be described as Participatory Assessment and Measurement because it draws on and extends Action Research and Participatory Action Research, both of which place empowerment, collaboration and integration at the core of research methods². In the same way, the Carers Star seeks to empower carers within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated with support work, rather than being a separate activity.

Empowerment

Underpinning the Carers Star is an understanding that, for carers, positive outcomes depend not only on their **external circumstances**, but also on the resources, skills and attitudes they need to face the challenges – often referred to as **resilience**. For that reason, the Carers Star both measures their external circumstances, and looks at how they are able to respond to those circumstances. This is a more empowering frame of reference for support and measurement than approaches that only deal with circumstances that are often outside the carer's control. The Carers Star focuses the attention of the support service and carer on what they can do together to develop the understanding, resources and skills the carer needs.

Users of the Outcomes Star report that it provides a much more empowering context for their work, where people are able to actively participate in the process rather than having assessment done to them. The Carers Star involves carers in their own process of change – and in the validation of their experience and perceptions, which is often critical to helping them make the changes they seek³.

Collaboration

When using the Star, the worker and carer assess the carer's needs together. Carers base their assessment on how they experience and respond to their situation. Workers utilise their experience of working with other carers generally, and their observations and reflections on this carer in particular. The intention is that the assessment emerges through a dialogue between carer and worker and this may include both participants shifting their views. In this regard, the Carers Star is neither a carer-only self-completion tool nor a worker-only completion tool – it is a collaborative tool.

The Carers Star makes the model of change explicit and the information that is collected – the reading – is immediately presented back to the carer in the form of a completed Star. This makes it possible for the carer and worker to take an overview together and reflect on the completed Star as a basis for deciding what action to take.

2 O'Brien, R. (2001) "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research" in Roberto Richardson (ed.) *Theory and Practice of Action Research*, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraiba (English version).

3 Burns, S., MacKeith, J. and Graham, K. (2008) *Using the Outcomes Star: Impact and Good Practice*, London: Homeless Link.

This contrasts with extractive approaches to assessment and measurement in which the worker, in the role of expert, collects data from the carer and takes that data away to make an assessment on their own. The expert may then decide what course of action is most appropriate.

Integration

The process of completing the Carers Star is an integral part of the journey, both for carer and worker, and it is intended to support as well as measure change. Completing the Star, engaging with the model of change and reflecting on the data presented on the Star can, in and of itself, result in a change of attitude within the carer. The process can have a similar impact on the worker. As a result, measurement is fully integrated into the keywork process, rather than being a separate activity that takes the worker away from their interaction with the carer. In addition, discussions about where a carer is on the Outcomes Star scales and Journey of Change naturally lead to thinking about next steps and action planning. This is why it is recommended that the Carers Star is used as an integral part of support.

This contrasts with traditional approaches where collection of data is seen as a separate process to intervention, and may be regarded as intrusive by workers and carers.

Fit with the Carer's Assessment and other processes

In the UK, many carer support services are funded by statutory authorities, which require a Carer's Assessment to be completed and have a particular format that services need to use. These assessments overlap with the areas on the Star but generally focus more on the practical tasks where a carer needs support and look less holistically at how caring affects their life and the changes they want to make. They often involve lengthy forms and are less client-friendly and accessible than the Carers Star.

Where services want to use the Carers Star and find it works well for carers and workers but are also required to complete a specific local authority Carer's Assessment, we recommend:

- Using the Carers Star directly with carers and then using the information gathered to complete the assessment, preferably back in the office rather than with the carer
- Identifying information in the assessment that cannot be gathered using the Star and adding those areas to discussions between workers and carers. This should avoid duplication and ensure essential questions are still asked.

We do not recommend using another outcomes tool. The Star should provide enough information to plan with carers what improvements are needed and how to make them.

The Star is useful in getting carers to open up and talk.

Carer support worker

It gave me a structured way of understanding my situation at the initial meeting.

Carer

How the Carers Star™ was developed

The development of the Carers Star was initiated in Scotland by SEEL – Social Enterprise in East Lothian – which secured investment from the Scottish Government Change Fund to collaborate with Triangle in developing the pilot version of the Carers Star. Carers Trust then joined the collaboration, piloted the Star for four months and collaborated with Triangle to finalise the Star following the pilot.

As with all versions of the Outcomes Star, the methodology was based on Action Research⁴ and the Existential Phenomenological research method⁵. Action Research is a collaborative process of identifying issues, trying out solutions and assessing what works. This phenomenological method places a strong emphasis on understanding the subjective experience of the person being researched and the meaning of the experience for them.

The Carers Star development process consisted of three main stages:

1) Data gathering

An initial workshop was held in Haddington, Scotland in November 2012, with a working group of people from SEEL, East Lothian Council, Carers of East Lothian and other local organisations working with carers. The workshop explored the following key questions that are common to all versions of the Outcomes Star:

- What are the main areas in which the projects are seeking to create change? These areas become the points of the Star
- What is the desired end point of the change process? This becomes the end point on the model of change that underpins all the scales
- What model of change describes the steps that carers take on the journey towards that end point? This is described in a series of steps showing a clearly discernible, qualitative difference between each step of the journey.

A range of techniques were used to draw out participants' experience and knowledge including:

- Using an Outcome Triangle tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific changes they are trying to bring about, and the activities the service carries out to achieve these changes
- Bringing to mind an individual carer who has undergone a substantial change and identifying the key areas of change for that person
- Structured questioning exercises to draw out the steps, one by one, in each outcome area. The focus with this session is on concreteness, drawing out information about the signs of change in detail.

2) Data analysis and the development of the draft Carers Star™

Triangle compiled all the material gathered at the workshop and reviewed it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. Material used by participating services was borne in mind, along with other versions of the Outcomes Star, but the raw data was allowed to speak for itself rather than organised according to existing models or frameworks. On the basis of this material, a draft version of the Carers Star was developed.

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4 O'Brien, R. (2001) "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research" in Roberto Richardson (ed.) *Theory and Practice of Action Research*, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraíba (English version).

5 McCall, R. (1983), "Phenomenological Psychology", Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin.

3) Consultation and piloting

Through an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and sharing again, the outcome areas, the Journey of Change and the descriptions of the steps towards change within each outcome area were refined until they resonated with the carer support workers and managers participating in the development process. This process had the following steps:

I was able to identify the carer's most urgent problems

Carer support worker

- A second workshop was held in February 2013. Here, the first draft of the Carers Star was presented and feedback was gathered. In light of this feedback, improvements were made and, following further consultation with SEEL and Carers Trust, a prototype version was produced for piloting.
- Workers and carers at a number of Carers Trust member organisations piloted the Carers Star for four months from late July to the end of November 2013, gathering feedback questionnaires and Star data for analysis by Triangle. Those involved in the pilot received training in how to use the Star with carers.
- A final workshop took place in London in December 2013, organised by Carers Trust, where the results of the pilot were reviewed. Participants shared their experiences of the Star, and the value and meaning of the data generated.
- Further revisions were subsequently made to the Carers Star. The final stage involved editing and designing to ensure that the tool was clear, accessible and user-friendly in advance of the first edition being published.

The pilot process and findings

The pilot version of the Carers Star had eight scales and data was gathered from 191 carers who completed two Star readings (though many more completed just one Star reading). The pilot explored three aspects:

1. The process of using the Star with carers
2. The extent to which the Star data showed change
3. Any changes needed to the Star scales.

1 Pilot feedback on the process of completing the Star™

The key points fed back from the 33 workers who used the tool during the pilot were:

- The Star gets carers engaged and talking openly about their role and helps workers identify where they most need support
- Completing the Star takes time but it is worth it. Nearly two thirds of workers (64%) agreed that it enabled them to provide better support.

The others were unsure, with only one of the 33 workers disagreeing

- It is easier to use than other tools and its visual aspect increases clarity, particularly in making it clear to carers what they have achieved. The Star Online web application is also easy to use
- The Star increases carers' self-awareness and helps them deal with issues in a manageable way, even when they are feeling overwhelmed by circumstances
- The majority of workers felt that the Star helped carers make progress.

It is good, and surprising, to see in black and white how my caring role affects me.

Carer

2 Pilot data highlights

Star data for the 191 carers who completed two readings was analysed using a simple spreadsheet developed by Triangle. The highlights of the data were:

Overall change

- 77% (148) of carers increased their overall reading
- 16% (30) of carers' readings showed no significant change while 7% slipped back
- The average reading increased from 3.4 to 4.0 during the pilot period.

Areas of greatest and least change:

- The greatest change was on the scale called Support in the pilot version, with an average increase of 0.9. This area has now been integrated into the other scales
- There were also significant shifts for scales called Well-being and Managing Stress and Caring with Confidence in the pilot version, with an average increase of 0.8 and 0.6 respectively
- On the scale called A Life of Your Own in the pilot version, the overall shift was smaller, with nearly half of the carers (47%) showing an improvement.
- The smallest change was recorded in an area called Relationships in the pilot version.

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3 Pilot feedback on changes needed to the Star™ itself

Following analysis of the data, feedback and robust discussions at the third workshop, a number of tweaks and revisions were agreed for the final draft of the Carers Star.

- The Star now has seven areas instead of eight, making it more manageable for workers and carers
- A new scale called Work was added, covering paid work, training, volunteering and education as a route to work. Many carers will not have needs in this area because they are retired or on carer benefits (so will be at 5 on the scale) but it was felt to be important to include this topic for those wanting to work or needing support to combine work and caring, and to fit with national priorities
- The Support scale from the pilot was absorbed into a number of other scales, particularly How You Feel and Time For Yourself
- Mental health is now included alongside physical health under the Health scale
- The Well-being and Managing Stress scale has been incorporated into How You Feel and the new Health scale. The Relationships scale has also been incorporated into How You Feel, which explicitly includes space to talk about key relationships
- The scales are now more explicit about the importance of addressing risk and safety for both carer and the person they care for
- Some other scales and titles were given minor tweaks. Caring With Confidence has become The Caring Role; Day to Day Tasks is now Managing at Home; and A Life of Your Own is now Time For Yourself.

4 Feedback from other stakeholders

During the development of the Star, Carers Trust introduced the draft tool to a number of other stakeholders and gathered their feedback.

- The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) National Carers Policy group gave very positive feedback. The majority of the group, alongside representatives from the Department of Health and Standing Commission for Carers, were impressed with progress and confident that the Star would have a significant impact on outcomes for carers
- The Star was introduced to over 30 interested Network Partners at Carers Trust's National Conference in Manchester, nearly all of whom expressed interest in using it in the future
- Progress on the Star was shared with carers, providers and commissioners associated with the Wiltshire Carers Advisory group. This mixed group gave the tool positive support across the board.

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Part one: Implementing the Carers Star™ in your project

Implementing the Star effectively and reaping the full benefits of using it takes time, continuous attention and a commitment to following the process through and addressing issues as they arise. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that the introduction of the Carers Star is led from the top. Only in this way will the Star receive the profile and backing it requires for developments to be co-ordinated across a service. We also recommend nominating champions within projects and setting up an implementation group to oversee the introduction of the Star.

The rest of this section covers a checklist of eight steps for introducing the Star into your project. Many organisations find it helpful to have continuous support with planning and implementation, in addition to Triangle's essential training for workers and managers, and the Star Online web application. To discuss your needs and the option of a bespoke implementation package, please email Triangle at info@triangleconsulting.co.uk.

1 Review your reasons for introducing the Carers Star™

There are a number of reasons why organisations decide to introduce the Carers Star.

Internal reasons:

- They want to take an outcomes approach to their work in order to measure success for individual carers, services and the organisation as a whole, and use this information to inform their service delivery
- They feel it will improve the support they provide to carers.

External reasons:

- To demonstrate the value of the service to funders or commissioners
- Because a funder or commissioner requires that they use the Star as a condition of contract.

Triangle's experience and research indicates that implementation is smoother and satisfaction is higher when organisations are motivated primarily by internal reasons. Even if you are introducing the Star for external reasons, we recommend that you adopt it in the spirit of learning and service improvement and capitalise on the internal benefits too.

My advice is to see the implementation of the Outcomes Star as a change management process. It is vital to communicate to keyworkers how it will help them to do their job and that it will help the organisation as a whole to make its case to the outside world. It is also vital to integrate the Star fully into keywork processes and training.

Manager at St Mungo's
Refers to the Outcomes Star for Homelessness

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2 Check that the Carers Star™ is suitable for you

Firstly, you will need to be confident that the Carers Star is the right tool for your service. There are two key questions that will help you do this.

i) Do you provide one-to-one ongoing support for carers?

The Carers Star is designed to be used in situations where a carer and worker are engaged in a one-to-one support relationship over a period of time. We would suggest at least six weeks. It may also be possible to use it with carers in a group, provided there is also some one-to-one time. If you only see or speak to a carer once or twice, for a short period of time, or have little or no one-to-one contact with them, it is probably not suitable for your service.

ii) Do you work holistically with carers?

The Carers Star is holistic, covering all the key aspects of life, and is designed to help you and the carers you work with assess the changes they are making in their attitudes, behaviour and skills across all these areas. If your service focuses on just one or two areas, for example addressing debt and other financial issues, the Star will not be suitable. However, it should work well if you are aiming to support carers in most, but not all, of the Star areas. If your service focuses on areas that are not in the Carers Star, you can assess a carer's progress towards these goals in another way alongside the Star.

If you have answered yes to these questions, it is likely that the Carers Star will be appropriate for your service. If not, you may wish to contact Triangle to discuss how to proceed. If you work primarily or entirely with young carers, you may want to consider **My Star for children and young people**, which was developed and tested with young carers, among other client groups. If there is currently no version that fits your service adequately, please contact Triangle to enquire about the latest versions in development, or the possibility of working with us to create a new version to meet your needs.

Organisations are not permitted to make changes to the Star under the terms of copyright for the tool. For more information, please refer to the copyright statement on page two of this guide or the Outcomes Star website www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Steps three, four and five below should be considered at the same time.

3 Run a pilot – try it out

Some workers may be resistant to the introduction of the Star, with understandable concerns about finding the time or introducing an additional tool or measurement. This was certainly the case at the start of the pilot. It may be advisable to pilot the Outcomes Star before rolling it out across your organisation. The benefits of running a pilot are:

- It enables you to test how the tool works for you in practice
- It helps you to answer the practical questions set out in point four below about how to integrate the Star into your ways of working prior to full implementation
- If it goes well, it creates a demonstration project and staff with experience of using the Star who can reassure, motivate and train others
- If there are problems, these can be addressed before the Star is rolled out across the organisation.

Research on the implementation of the Outcomes Star found that there was resistance from workers within over half of the 25 organisations interviewed. However, in nearly all cases this was quickly overcome. The following are examples of tried and tested options for addressing worker resistance effectively:

- **Taking time to allow people to realise the benefits** so that workers see the Star as making their job easier and better, rather than simply adding another administrative loop
- **Allowing people to express reservations and ask questions.** The Star represents a significantly new way of working and people may need to have their concerns and questions heard and addressed
- **A flexible approach at first.** Allowing the more willing and enthusiastic workers to give it a try can work well. If these workers come back to the team with positive experiences, this can enthuse others. In addition, feedback from the carers they work with and from other professionals can provide invaluable concrete evidence of the benefits and popularity of the Star, and offset fears that carers won't engage with it
- **Involving carers in the process, where possible.** This not only means that carers using the service understand and have a say in what is happening, but their enthusiasm also adds credibility and legitimacy to the use of the Star within the service.

4 Integrate the Carers Star™ into your ways of working, paperwork and IT

The Carers Star works best as an integral part of the process of working with a carer, with Star readings linked to reviews. It is important that the Star is fully incorporated into this process so that it does not unnecessarily duplicate other discussions, paperwork or IT. This probably means you will need to amend existing ways of working.

How will the information be recorded and summarised?

Stars can be completed with carers on paper, using the Star Chart and Action Plan, or online, using the Star Online. This web application, run by Triangle, is available for an annual licence fee. The Star Online enables you to record Star readings, notes and action plans on screen, and analyse your outcomes data at individual, caseload and service level. It also enables you to summarise outcomes across a number of services and to make comparisons, both within your organisation and nationally.

Where laptops, iPads, smartphones and other mobile devices are available, carers may find the interactive experience of completing the Star online more engaging than using the paper version. A notable advantage of online

Workers were unsure at first, but my approach was to give the Star to those workers likely to be most open and encourage them to have a go. Almost immediately, positive feedback from those workers and their service users encouraged others to try it too.

Manager, Croftlands Trust
Refers to the Homelessness Star

We find it absolutely fantastic: to be able to point to who is responsible for what in a timed period is brilliant.

Carer support worker

The Action Plan is excellent for recording and showing achievements.

Carer support worker