



Drug & Alcohol Star™

The Outcomes Star for drug and alcohol recovery

“ 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

as 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:

- NORCAS for working in collaboration with Triangle on the development of the Drug and Alcohol Star
- Aquarius for additional input into the Drug and Alcohol Star
- Alcohol Concern and all the organisations who collaborated in the development of the original Alcohol Outcomes Spider in 2005 and the Alcohol Star in 2010 (both of which have helped inform this version), especially Aquarius, East Midlands Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT) and alcohol services in the East Midlands.

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Introduction

Introduction to the Drug & Alcohol Star™

The Drug and Alcohol Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a family of tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people.

It is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change across a range of services and people with different needs. It is also a keywork tool that can support service users to make changes by providing them with a map of the Journey of Change and a way of 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 people with a mental health condition, people receiving support with work and learning, teenagers and vulnerable families.

The Drug and Alcohol Star focuses on ten core areas that have been found to be critical in supporting people to progress towards and maintain a life free from drug misuse and problem drinking:

1. Drug use
2. Alcohol use
3. Physical health
4. Meaningful use of time
5. Community
6. Emotional health
7. Accommodation
8. Money
9. Offending
10. Family and relationships.

For each area there is a ten-point scale measuring where the person is on their journey towards addressing each one, and identifying the amount of support they need. These scales are all based on the Journey of Change, which is an understanding of the steps people go through in the move towards recovery from alcohol or drug dependency. This Journey of Change comprises five stages:

At the beginning people are **stuck**. They don't feel able to face the problem or accept help.

From stuck they move to **accepting help**. At this stage they are aware they want to get away from the problem but look to a worker or someone else to sort things out for them and go along with some of the things they suggest.

A key turning point is when people start **believing** that they can make a difference themselves in their life. At this stage, they start to look ahead towards how they want to live rather than being caught up entirely in

their current problems and in the past. They start to take the initiative and try new things to achieve their goal in changing their relationship to drugs and/or drinking. This is a tough place to be and it can help to have plenty of support.

The next step is **learning** how to make what they want a reality, building on what works for them and increasing their confidence in a future without drug or alcohol misuse. People will find this stage hard at times and do need support through the process.

As they learn, people gradually become more **self-reliant** until they get to the point when they can manage without help from a drug and alcohol support service.

The full Journey of Change is described in detail in part two of this guide and the Drug and Alcohol Star User Guide provides the detailed scales for each of the ten core areas within these five stages.

The Drug and Alcohol Star is underpinned by the assumption that positive growth is a possible and realistic goal for all service users. The Star is designed to support as well as measure this growth by focusing on people's potential rather than their problems.

It is one of the few tools that both commissioners and the commissioned agree on – both see it as a good tool that works for clients, workers, managers and commissioners.

Derbyshire Alcohol Advisory Service

I find it really useful because it's pictorial and useful for clients.

Worker, NORCAS

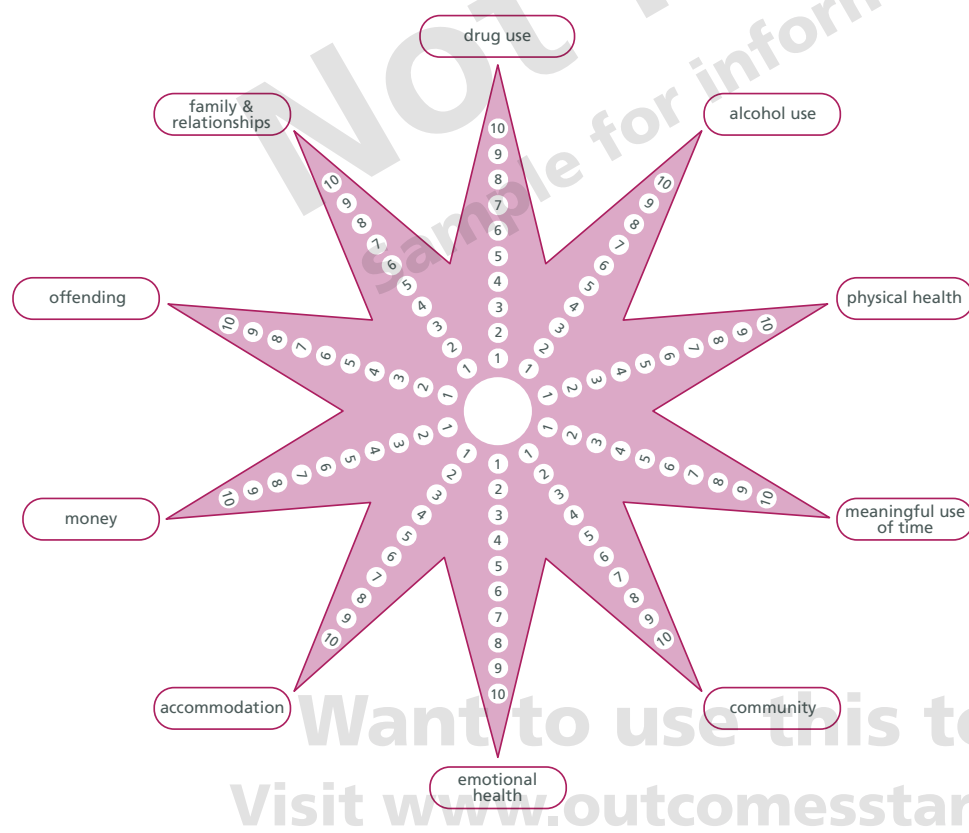


Figure 1: The Drug and Alcohol Star

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Theoretical foundations

Values and assumptions underpinning the Outcomes Star™

New approach

The approach underpinning the Outcomes Star family of tools is, we believe, an original approach to assessment and outcomes measurement. The Star approach can be described as Participatory Assessment and Measurement (PAM) because it draws on and extends Action Research and Participatory Action Research (PAR), both of which place empowerment, collaboration and integration at the core of research methods¹. In the same way, the Outcomes Star seeks to empower people within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated with support work, rather than a separate activity.

Empowerment

Underpinning the Outcomes Star is an understanding that, in order for change to take place in people's lives, service providers need to help people to understand the motivation, beliefs and skills that are needed for them to create that change for themselves.

While practical changes in a person's circumstances, like starting work or beginning an education placement, may be important, these things do not bring about lasting change. It is the change that takes place within the individual that is the key active ingredient in achieving a more permanent, self-sustained independence and happiness. This is why the primary focus in most versions of the Outcomes Star, including the Drug and Alcohol Star, is the relationship of the individual to the challenges that they face.

This contrasts with other assessment and outcomes measurement tools that focus on the severity of a defined problem, such as the number of units of alcohol consumed, or on external circumstances, such as whether a person has a job or a home or not. The Outcomes Star approach assumes that these things are important and should be measured but that the picture they give on their own is limited.

Service users and front-line workers report that the Outcomes Star provides a much more empowering context for their keywork where service users are able to be active participants in the process rather than having assessment done to them. Being involved in their own process of change – and in the validation of their experience and perceptions – is often critical to helping them make the changes they seek².

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¹ 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)

² Burns, S., MacKeith, J. and Graham, K. (2008) *Using the Outcomes Star: Impact and Good Practice*, London: Homeless Link

Collaboration

When using the Outcomes Star, the worker and service user assess the service user's needs together. Service users base their assessment on their knowledge and understanding of themselves and workers utilise their experience of working with other people generally and their observations and reflections on this person's behaviour in particular. The intention is that the assessment emerges through a dialogue between service user and worker and this may include both people shifting their views.

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

This contrasts with extractive approaches to assessment and measurement in which the worker, in the role of expert, collects data from the service user and takes that data away to make an assessment on their own. The expert may then decide what course of action is most appropriate and try to persuade the service user that this is the best way forward for them.

Integration

The process of completing the Outcomes Star is an integral part of working with the service user and it is intended to support as well as measure change. The process of completing the Star, engaging with the Journey of Change and reflecting on the data as presented in the Star can, in and of itself, result in a change of attitude within the service user. It can have a similar impact on the staff and carers working with the person. As a result, the assessment is a part of the intervention. In addition, discussion of where a service user is on the Outcomes Star scales and Journey of Change naturally leads to discussions about next steps and action planning. This is why it is recommended that the Outcomes Star is used as an integral part of keywork.

This contrasts with traditional approaches in which the collection of data is seen as a separate process to the intervention and may be regarded as intrusive by workers and service users.

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How the Outcomes Stars™ are developed

The methodology for developing versions of the Outcomes Star is based on Action Research³ and the Existential Phenomenological (PE) research method⁴. 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 or people being researched and the meaning of the experience for them.

The development usually consists of three main stages, in collaboration with a working group of keyworkers, managers and service users (where it is impractical to involve service users directly in the working group they are consulted separately):

1) Data gathering

An initial one-day workshop of the working group explores the following key questions that are common to all versions of the Outcomes Star:

- What are the main areas in which services and service users 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 service users 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 are 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 they carry out to achieve these changes
- Bringing to mind an individual 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 Outcomes Star™

Triangle compiles all the material gathered at the workshop and reviews it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. Existing material and other versions of the Outcomes Star are borne in mind, but the intention is always to allow the raw data to speak for itself rather than to organise it according to existing models or frameworks. On the basis of this material, a draft version of the Star is developed.

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³ 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)

⁴ 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 descriptions of the steps towards change in each outcome area are honed until they resonate with the service users, support workers and managers participating in the development process. This process varies depending on the complexity of the version of the Star but generally has at least the following four main steps:

- A second workshop of the working group where the first draft of the Star is presented to workshop participants and feedback is gathered. In the light of this feedback, improvements are made to the Star
- Workers and service users test the Star during a minimum four-month pilot and gather feedback on the process and tool itself
- A final workshop where the results of the pilot are reviewed and the experience of participants is shared
- Further revisions to the Star followed by editing and design to ensure the tool is clear, accessible and user-friendly in advance of the first edition being published.

History of development of the Drug and Alcohol Star™

The development of this version of the Star has had a number of contributory phases, spanning ten years and all going through the development process described above. These are:

Development of the St Mungo's Star

In 2002-03 Triangle worked with St Mungo's to create a 'distance travelled' outcomes tool that could be used with clients across the full range of their services, from street outreach and hostels through to work and learning services. This gave rise to the original prototype of the Outcomes Star. The work was part-funded by the London Housing Foundation, with a view to sharing learning for the benefit of the homelessness sector and potentially beyond.

Development of the Alcohol Outcomes Spider

Triangle then worked with Alcohol Concern to develop a sector-wide outcomes tool for alcohol services and created a tool based on the same principles as the St Mungo's Star – the Alcohol Spider in 2004-05. Forty alcohol services participated over a period of nine months in the Star development process described above, including residential, structured day and community-based services with philosophies of both abstinence and controlled drinking.

Publication of the first Outcomes Star™

Between 2004 and 2005, Triangle worked with a number of homelessness service providers in London within the London Housing Foundation Impact through Outcomes programme and also with the Supporting People Team in Rochdale. Based on this combined learning, the first Outcomes Star was published in homelessness in 2006.

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Development of the Recovery Star™ in mental health

In 2007-8 Triangle worked with the Mental Health Providers Forum and a range of voluntary sector service providers to develop a version of the Outcomes Star for mental health – the Recovery Star. This again took the learning and developments further, particularly around the presentation of the Journey of Change and the format of the Star materials.

Development of the Alcohol Star™

In 2009, Triangle worked with Aquarius and Alcohol Concern, with funding from Birmingham Drug and Alcohol Team, on a desk-based process to combine learning from the Alcohol Spider and the Recovery Star to create the Alcohol Star, which was published by Alcohol Concern as a test version in 2009. This incorporated the new presentation of the underlying Journey of Change and new Star material format developed for the Recovery Star.

This test version was then piloted in 2010 through collaboration between the East Midlands Regional Alcohol Programme, Alcohol Concern and Triangle. Three East Midlands' services completed the Alcohol Star with over 100 service users at assessment and three-month review, alongside a measure of alcohol consumption. As a result of learning from this pilot, the Alcohol Star was revised and published as a final version.

Development of the Drug and Alcohol Star™

Triangle was approached by a number of combined services for drug and alcohol recovery requesting a version for both client groups and in 2011 worked in collaboration with NORCAS to develop the Drug and Alcohol Star. This process centred around two workshops and a four-month pilot of the draft Drug and Alcohol Star with 47 service users, of which six had two Star readings within the pilot period.

In addition to the developments described above, in developing the Drug and Alcohol Star, Triangle drew on increasing work and learning around the validity and reliability of the Outcomes Stars, particularly studies carried out on the Recovery Star in 2010–11. While the findings were positive in most of the tests conducted, these highlighted the potential benefits of placing greater emphasis on inter-rater reliability in the development of the Stars. As a result, the Drug and Alcohol Star includes 'key points' for each of the scales to support consistency and accuracy.

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Pilot Findings

Highlights from the pilots

A total of 47 service users completed the Drug and Alcohol Star at least once during a four-month pilot of the tool within the NORCAS Great Yarmouth service – six of them repeated it towards the end of the pilot. In addition, over 170 service users completed at least one reading of the Alcohol Star during the four-month pilot in the East Midlands and 103 completed a second reading:

- 93% of workers in the East Midlands pilot reported that the process of using the Star with clients was positive and that the majority of their clients had engaged with the process and found it helpful
- 86% of clients in the East Midlands pilot were positive; most appreciated the visual aspect and simplicity of the tool, and enjoyed the process of completing it
- Feedback in the Great Yarmouth pilot indicated that the ten areas covered were the right ones but highlighted the need for changes to the Community scale plus other minor additions and improvements
- 67% of the service users completing two Stars in the Great Yarmouth pilot and 75% of the service users in the East Midlands pilot increased their overall reading
- Analysis of the data from the East Midlands pilot showed a strong correlation between progress as measured by the Alcohol Star and reduction in consumption.

The Drug and Alcohol Star™ in the wider policy context in the UK

A major change to previous government policy, the British government's 2010 Drug Strategy sets out a fundamentally different approach to preventing drug use and in supporting recovery from drug and alcohol dependence⁵. Crucially, the strategy has recovery at its heart and places emphasis on providing a more holistic approach, by addressing other issues in addition to treatment to support people dependent on drugs or alcohol, such as offending, housing and employment.

The Drug and Alcohol Star fits well within this context because it is holistic and captures outcomes in relation to ten areas of a client's life. Services collaborating in the development have found these areas to be critical in supporting people to progress towards and maintain a life free from drug misuse and problem drinking, including dealing with related issues such as offending, housing and steps towards employment.

How the Drug and Alcohol Star™ works with other tools and models

The Drug and Alcohol Star may partially replace assessment and review paperwork in a service, and part one of this guide recommends combining and streamlining paperwork. However, it does not provide specific information such as a client's living situation, work status, family context or the frequency or type of any offending, so this information still needs to be gathered by the services in their assessment.

Further, the Drug and Alcohol Star shows change in a client's attitude and behaviour in the ten outcome areas covered; it does not measure the frequency or quantity of drugs or alcohol consumed. Services therefore need to gather this information as part of assessment in addition to completing the Star.

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⁵ HM Government (2010) "Drug Strategy 2010: Reducing Demand, Restricting Supply, Building Recovery: Supporting People to live a Drug Free Life"

At the time of publication, services in the UK were required to use the government's Treatment Outcomes Profile (TOP) form⁶ with drug clients. TOP provides a measure of levels of consumption, offending and health and social functioning; without it services need a measure of consumption alongside the Star, e.g. a drink diary. Services may use TOP because it is a requirement and the Drug and Alcohol Star because the Star is favoured as an effective keyworking tool. If both tools are used with a client, the three TOP 1-20 scales partially duplicate information gathered using the Star.

Some services may find it helpful to discuss the Drug and Alcohol Star directly with clients and complete it collaboratively while also gathering the necessary information to later complete TOP as a back-office tool.

The Journey of Change underpinning the Drug and Alcohol Star maps closely onto the Cycle of Change model⁷ which is commonly used and understood within the substance misuse sector. It is therefore relatively easy for workers familiar with the Cycle of Change to understand and use the Journey of Change model and approach integral to the Star.

Scale point	Star stage	Cycle of change equivalent
1	Stuck	Pre-contemplation
2		
3	Accepting help	Contemplation
4		
5	Believing	Decision
6		Action
7	Learning	Action
8		
9	Self-reliance	Maintenance
10		

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⁶ The Treatment Outcomes Profile (TOP) is a drug treatment outcome monitoring tool developed by the National Treatment Agency for substance misuse (NTA). It is intended for use in all structured treatment for drug misusers and consists of a brief set of questions for completion at both baseline and every three months during treatment. There are questions related to drug misuse, injecting risk behaviour and offending and three scales covering psychological health, physical health and quality of life

⁷ Prochaska, J.O., DiClemente, C.C. (1982) "Transtheoretical Therapy: Towards a more integrative model of change" *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, Vol. 19 pp 276-88

Drug and Alcohol Star™ resources

There is a range of resources available to help organisations use the Drug and Alcohol Star effectively.

Drug and Alcohol Star™ Chart and Action Plan

The Star Chart and Action Plan is a four-page document that includes the Star Chart, on which the Star reading is marked, a summary of the Journey of Change for quick reference, space for notes, and a simple action plan your organisation may also choose to use. It is completed with service users when using the Drug and Alcohol Star as a paper-based system.

Drug and Alcohol Star™ User Guide

The Drug and Alcohol Star User Guide contains brief visual scales and detailed scales, plus key points to help identify where a client is on the Journey of Change in each of the outcome areas. There is also a brief introduction to the Drug and Alcohol Star for service users. The User Guide is essential for all workers using the Drug and Alcohol Star and is designed so that it can also be given to service users, when appropriate.

The Drug and Alcohol Star™ Online

The Drug and Alcohol Star, along with many other versions of the Star, is available online via an intuitive web application called the Star Online. This application has a feature that allows users to complete the Star Chart with service users on screen, incorporating the scales from the Drug and Alcohol Star User Guide and guidance for workers and service users. The Star Online can be used in conjunction with a paper-based system, if preferred. Workers and service users can complete the Star on paper and then input the reading on the Star Online at a later date.

The Star Online is secure and provides a wide range of features that enable organisations to analyse and report on the outcomes data that 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 Drug and Alcohol Star for an annual licence fee, which is based on the number of keyworkers and managers using the Star.

For more information, or to sign up to the Star Online, go to www.staronline.org.uk.

This Organisation Guide

The guidance that follows is intended to support the implementation and use of the Drug and Alcohol Star. Part one is for service managers and provides guidance and good practice examples in implementing the Drug and Alcohol Star across a service or organisation. Part two presents guidance for support workers in using the Drug and Alcohol Star with service users.

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Outcomes Star™ website

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

- How the Star was developed
- Research and validation material about 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.

Training

It is essential that workers receive training before using the Drug and Alcohol Star. Triangle provides a range of in-house training courses and runs a licensed trainer scheme for those wanting to cascade training within their organisations. For further details see www.outcomesstar.org.uk or email training@triangleconsulting.co.uk.

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Part 1: Implementing the Star™ in your service or organisation

Implementing the Star can affect the way the service is delivered and managed in a number of ways. For instance, it can:

- Provide greater clarity about what the service is trying to achieve and the process of change for service users and keyworkers, resulting in more focused keywork
- Change the way that keyworking is carried out, documented and supervised, depending on your existing systems
- Introduce new data collection and therefore the need to consolidate paperwork, avoid duplication, integrate with IT systems and ensure all levels of management have the information they need
- Demonstrate effectiveness and highlight areas for improvement with which workers and managers need to engage
- Provide a focus for discussion with commissioners about the role and contribution of the service in the wider local strategic context
- Help to change the culture of service delivery from one in which service users are passive recipients of services to one that endeavours to empower service users and maximise their independence.

Implementing the Star effectively and achieving the full benefits of using it can therefore take time, continuous attention and a commitment to follow the process through and address issues as they arise. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that the implementation of the Drug and Alcohol Star is led from the top of the organisation. Only in this way will the Star receive the profile and backing it requires for developments to be co-ordinated across an organisation.

The remainder of this section covers a checklist of eight steps to introducing the Star into your organisation. Many organisations find it helpful to have support with the implementation process. Triangle can help with specific aspects of this process and provide background support or mentoring to those leading the implementation. We also provide implementation packages that include Outcomes Star training and a licence to use the Star Online web application.

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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1 Review your reasons for introducing the Star™

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

Internal reasons:

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

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 by internal reasons primarily. 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.

2 Check that the Star™ is suitable for you

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

i) Do you have an ongoing keywork relationship with service users?

The Star has been designed to be used in situations where a service user and worker are engaged in a one-to-one keyworking or other support relationship over a period of time. We would suggest at least six weeks.

If you only see a service user once or twice for a short period of time, or have a drop-in service with little or no one-to-one contact, then it is probably not suitable for your service.

We must sell it as an interactive tool that instigates conversations and provides a pictorial understanding needs.

Team leader,
NORCAS

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ii) Are you aiming to help service users make changes in their attitudes, behaviour or skills and abilities?

The Star is designed to help you and your service users assess changes that they are making in their attitudes, behaviour and skills. If your service is not intended to work on changes like these, the Star is not suitable for you.

iii) Do you work holistically with service users?

Do you aim to support people in a number of aspects of their life? If your service focuses on one or two aspects of a person's life, the Drug and Alcohol Star will not be suitable as it is holistic, covering a number of aspects. However, it will work well if you are aiming to help service users with most but not all of the areas described in the Drug and Alcohol Star.

Your service may aim to help clients make changes in areas that are not included in the Drug and Alcohol Star. If this is the case, you may wish to assess your service users' progress towards this goal in another way.

iv) Does the Journey of Change describe the journey you help your service users to take?

The Journey of Change underpins the scales for each outcome area. If this journey does not fit with your understanding of the steps you are helping people to take towards a life free from drug misuse and problem-drinking then the Star is probably not suitable for your service.

Some services concentrate on one or two parts of the journey. It is helpful to have a sense of which part of the journey your service or services focus on. If you only work with service users on a very small part of the journey, say at the **learning** and **self-reliance** stages, you may find that the Star will not pick up the small and subtle changes people make within one stage. In this case, you may want to supplement the Star with some additional measures.

If you have answered yes to these four questions, it is likely that the Drug and Alcohol Star will be appropriate for your service. If you have answered no to one or more of them, it may not be. You may wish to contact Triangle to discuss how to proceed.

If you are not sure that the Drug and Alcohol Star is the best version for your service, check out the Outcomes Star website – www.outcomesstar.org.uk – to see what other versions are available. If there is currently no version that fits your service adequately, please contact Triangle to enquire about new versions in development or the possibility of working with us to create a new version to meet your needs.

Organisations are not allowed 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 or the Outcomes Star website.

Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765

3 Run a pilot - try it out

It is advisable to pilot the Outcomes Star in one or more services before rolling it out across your whole organisation. The benefits of running a pilot are that:

- It enables you to test how the tool works for you in practice
- It helps you to answer the practical questions set out on the next page 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 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 keyworkers see the Star as making their job easier and better, rather than as another administrative loop. This can be done through formal training and/or discussions in team meetings.
- **Allowing people to express reservations and ask questions.** The Star represents a significantly new way of working and staff 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 their service users can provide invaluable concrete evidence of the benefits and popularity of the Star and off-set fears that service users will find it lengthy or intrusive
- **Involving service users in the process.** This not only means that service users understand and have a say in what is happening but their support also adds credibility and legitimacy to use of Star within the service.

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 just have a go with it in their own way. Almost immediately, positive feedback from those workers and their clients encouraged others to try it too.

**Manager,
Croftlands Trust**

Refers to the Outcomes Star
for Homelessness

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

The Star works best as an integral part of the keywork process with Star Chart readings taking place at the point when assessment and action planning would normally occur in your service. It is important that the Star is fully incorporated into this process so that it does not duplicate other discussions or paperwork, such as needs assessments. This may mean amending existing paperwork to cover the same areas as the Drug and Alcohol Star and ensuring that any specific information on consumption, accommodation, family context, work or offending is retained but kept to a minimum.

When to use the Star™

It is up to your organisation to set a policy specifying when service users should complete the Star and how that fits with other processes. This policy will depend on the length and intensity of a service and how quickly people are anticipated to change. For most types of service, we recommend:

- A first reading at the point of developing a support plan and within the first four weeks ideally
- Using the Star every three to six months, linking it to reviews of support or action plans
- On exit from the service.

It may not be appropriate to complete the Star the first time workers meet new service users or as an assessment tool to decide whether they will use the service. This may be too soon for something as in-depth as the completion of the Star.

There is a balance between getting to know a service user and the need to record an accurate start point before too much change happens. If the service user is not able to engage in keywork or with the Star in their first month, you could ask workers to record a “worker-only” initial reading to provide a baseline. This can be recorded as such on the Star Chart and when entering the data on the Star Online.

The frequency with which the Star will be completed depends on:

- **How quickly people change.** With young people and other services where a considerable amount may happen in as little as three months, readings could be more frequent. In services such as those for people with enduring mental health issues, where change is slow or maintenance is the norm, the gap could be longer.
- **The intensity of service delivery.** With intense interventions, such as residential rehabilitation services, it may be appropriate to complete a Star more often. For services seeing people less frequently, for instance monthly, a longer gap would be appropriate.
- **How long service users stay with your service.** For short-term services of 6-12 weeks it is recommended to complete Stars at the start and end of the service. Longer-term services – such as those of over a year – may allow six months or more between readings, particularly where clients change slowly. It is not recommended to use the Star in services of less than six weeks in length.

Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Comparing the first and last Star will give a clear picture of the outcomes for that person.

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765

Can it replace other paperwork?

The Star is not intended to increase the amount of paperwork an organisation requires service users and workers to complete.

Services may find that the Star Chart and Action Plan can fully or partially replace their existing needs assessment and/or action or support plans. Many organisations may find they still need a separate risk assessment.

If your organisation decides to continue to use an existing action plan format, it is not necessary to complete the Star Action Plan in addition to this.

How will the information be recorded and summarised?

The Star Online enables you to record Star readings, notes and action plans on screen, and to 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 within your organisation, and nationally. It can be used on its own or integrated with an existing client management system.

If you operate paper-based files, it is advisable to keep a copy of each Star reading and the Star notes on the service user's file. The service user may also want to have their own copy. Even when using a paper-based system, it is also necessary to enter the Star readings onto a database of some kind (for example, a spreadsheet) so that the information can be summarised and analysed for a whole organisation or project. We recommend that you use the Star Online for this. An alternative to using the Star Online is to integrate the Drug and Alcohol Star into an existing IT system, if you have one. A licence is required to do this. If you are considering integration, please take a look at page two for more details of the copyright for the Star and email info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to discuss a licence.

You can access the Drug and Alcohol Star Online at www.staronline.org.uk.

Workers have to internalise the Star to such a degree that they can help people understand the journey.

**Team Leader,
NORCAS**

To complete the Star collaboratively, the worker needs to share their belief that something is a problem even if that is not the client's perspective. Challenging in the first session is mostly not appropriate but it is important to have that conversation.

**Manager,
NORCAS**

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Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk**

**Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765**

5 Train staff to use the Star™

The Star is as good as the workers who use it, so it is vital that all members of staff working directly with service users receive some training. This can be provided by Triangle, see the resources section of this guide for details.

You might find it helpful to set up a steering group made up of managers, workers and, in some cases, service users, to oversee the introduction of the Star.

It is important to make clear how the Star fits with other initiatives and training that staff have received. For example, if your organisation uses Motivational Interviewing, it will help workers if you can integrate the Star into this approach. Triangle's two-day Outcomes Star and Keyworking course contains a focus on Motivational Interviewing, for example.

Effective use of the Star requires that those using it are skilled in working with service users and confident to challenge appropriately and support clients to change. Introducing the Star may be an opportunity to review the training needs of your staff in this area and address any outstanding concerns. Email training@triangleconsulting.co.uk for details.

Not for use
Sample for information only

**Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk**

**Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765**

6 Ensure quality and consistency in the use of the Star™

Star data will only provide an accurate picture of the progress of service users if those using it have a good understanding of the tool and apply the scales consistently. We recommend that you ensure this happens in the following ways.

Staff supervision

When discussing a worker's caseload, draw on the service users' completed Stars – using all or a sample, depending on the caseload. This will help managers to ensure that the Star is being used as planned and completed accurately, with an understanding of the Journey of Change. It can also provide the manager with a quick, visual overview of a worker's caseload.

File auditing

As part of the normal process of auditing files, managers should ensure that Star records are present, accurate and stored confidentially.

Co-worker feedback

One way to ensure staff use the Star consistently is to use a system of co-worker feedback. Pairs of co-workers review a number of each other's cases and complete their own Star Charts for each of the service users. They do this without any knowledge of the scale points their colleague has already chosen and without sight of any completed Star Charts. They then compare their readings to discuss and learn from each other's approach. Where appropriate, workers may want to go back to the service user's file and moderate the readings recorded at that time. If so, this should be discussed with the service user or recorded as a worker-only reading.

Team meetings

When discussing service users in team meetings, look at their Stars and explore where they are on the Journey of Change. This kind of discussion enables the team to develop a shared understanding of how to use the scales and the Journey of Change and become familiar with the framework.

Data quality

Users of the Star Online will need to confirm that the quality of the data being entered is ensured through the measures described above, or that plans are in place to do this.

7.1 Routine monitoring

We suggest that for routine monitoring purposes you compare the initial service user reading with their most recent reading.

The tables on the next page show fictional data for service users in a residential setting and are designed to illustrate the formats for reporting and learning from Star data – these are the core tables used for the Star Online's reports.