Outcomes Star
The Star for people with housing and other needs

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

The Outcomes Star is an invaluable tool for our sector

Support is more systematic and structured

We have incorporated it into assessment and three monthly reviews

It helps identify training needs for staff and volunteers

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

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and in some cases life changing

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Developed by Sara Burns, Kate Graham and Joy MacKeith of Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise
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The Outcomes Star™

This version of the Outcomes Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, scales 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](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk).

Homeless Link lead on dissemination of the Outcomes Star for people with housing and other needs among voluntary sector homeless services in the United Kingdom. For more information see [www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk).

Triangle and Homeless Link both offer training, IT solutions and other support in using the Outcomes Star. For more information see the Resources section of the Organisation Guide.

Acknowledgements

The Outcomes Star has a long history of development and we would like to thank all the managers, workers and clients who have contributed their feedback and made it possible for Triangle to develop such an accessible and effective set of tools. Triangle and Homeless Link would particularly like to thank:

• St Mungo’s for their vital role in developing the original Star. Without their energy and vision the Outcomes Star may never have been born at all.
• Other organisations that have embraced, tested and contributed include Thames Reach, The Passage, Single Homeless Project, Rochdale Council’s Supporting People Team and SP funded service providers in Rochdale. We would also like to thank the Mental Health Providers Forum and its members, who, by commissioning a mental health version of the Star, provided a rich new forum for developing the Star and made a significant contribution to the improvements.
• Lastly we would like to thank the London Housing Foundation for initiating the Impact through Outcomes Programme which made the development of the Star possible, and for commissioning and funding the first and the second edition of the Star.
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or 020 7272 8765
Introduction to the Outcomes Star™

The Outcomes Star for homelessness is one of a family of tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people – the Outcomes Stars.

It is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change across a range of services that work with people who have 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 needed to make positive changes, and a way of plotting their progress along the way.

The Outcomes Star for homelessness was the first Outcomes Star to be developed and this is the third edition. Tailored versions are now also 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 Outcomes Star for homelessness focuses on ten core areas that have been found to be critical when supporting people to move away from homelessness:

1. Motivation and taking responsibility
2. Self-care and living skills
3. Managing money and personal administration
4. Social networks and relationships
5. Drug and alcohol misuse
6. Physical health
7. Emotional and mental health
8. Meaningful use of time
9. Managing tenancy and accommodation
10. Offending.

For each core area, there is a ten-point scale that measures where the service user is on their journey towards addressing each area and identifying the amount of support needed. These are all based on a model – the Journey of Change – an understanding of the steps people go through in the move away from homelessness. 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 here 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.

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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 change their relationship to the issues that have contributed to them being homeless. 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 their ability to find and maintain accommodation for themselves. People will find this stage hard at times and 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 homelessness service.

The Journey of Change is similar to the Prochaska and DiClemente Cycle of Change. The full Journey of Change is described in detail in part two of this guide and the Outcomes Star User Guide provides the detailed scales for each of the ten core areas within these five stages.

The Outcomes Star family of tools are founded on 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.

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 way of looking at 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 methods. 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

A fundamental principle of the Outcomes Star is an understanding that, in order for change to take place in people’s lives, service providers need to build the motivation, beliefs and skills of the person to create that change.

While practical changes in a person’s circumstances, such as new accommodation, may be important, these do not bring about lasting change. Change within the person is a key active ingredient and it is therefore the relationship of the individual to the challenges they face that is the primary focus in most versions of the Outcomes Star. This value recognises societal or other external factors beyond people’s control, while empowering them to change the things they can.

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 being passively assessed. 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 seek.

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 people to see changes they have made directly and to discuss these with the worker.


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for the service user and worker to take an overview together and 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.

How the Outcomes Stars™ are developed

The methodology for developing versions of the Outcomes Star is based on Action Research⁴ and the Existential Phenomenological (PE) 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 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 the 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 Consulting 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.

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 Outcomes Star™

The Outcomes Star for homelessness was the first Star to be published and was developed over a number of phases, each of which has helped contribute to the Star development process now used for all new versions.

Development of the St Mungo’s Star

Between 2002 and 2003, 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 St Mungo’s Star. The work was part funded by the London Housing Foundation’s eight-year Impact Through Outcomes programme with a view to the learning being shared for the benefit of the homelessness sector and potentially beyond.
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. Through work with the Single Homeless Project in particular, the Star’s scales and other developments were introduced to build on the potential of the Outcomes Star as a positive keyworking tool, as well as an outcomes tool. Implementation of the Star within Thames Reach contributed to learning, in particular, about how outcomes data could be utilised. The Passage day centre also provided feedback at this stage. The original Outcomes Star visual identity and house style was developed with user experience designers Jellymould. Based on this combined learning and development, the first Outcomes Star was published in 2006 by the London Housing Foundation.

Development of the Recovery Star™ in mental health and research into use of the Outcomes Star™

In 2007–2008 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 Mental Health Recovery Star. This again took the learning and developments further, particularly the presentation of the Journey of Change and the format of the Star materials.

In 2008, the London Housing Foundation commissioned Triangle to research the impact the Outcomes Star had made on homelessness services, their workers and service users, within keywork and at service level, as a means to provide reports and identify areas needing improvement. Star Impact: the Impact and Good Practice of Using the Outcomes Star was published in 2008, sharing learning about good implementation of the Stars.

Drawing on the Recovery Star and this report, the second edition of the Outcomes Star for homelessness was published in 2008, using the new format of materials, including detailed scales in the Star User Guide and other developments.

Publication of the third edition of the Outcomes Star™

This latest edition of the Outcomes Star for homelessness was published in 2013. It brings the Organisation Guide up to date and benefits from the learning Triangle has gained from producing 15 more versions of the Outcomes Star for different sectors and services. In addition, prior to the publication of this edition, a number of small-scale research studies have been carried out into the effectiveness of the Outcomes Star and the validity of the data it generates, and these have contributed further learning. All this learning has informed this latest Organisation Guide and while the content of the scales and Star Chart are unchanged, we are now proud to present them in the latest house style. This includes ‘key points’ for each of the Star scales, to support accuracy of use.

Outcomes Star™ resources

There is a range of resources available to help organisations use the Outcomes Star effectively.

The 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 Outcomes Star as a paper-based system.
The User Guide

The Outcomes 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 Outcomes Star for service users. The User Guide is essential for all workers using the Outcomes Star and is designed so that it can also be given to service users, when appropriate.

The Star Online

The Outcomes Star for homelessness, along with all published versions of the Outcomes Star, is available to use online via an intuitive web application called the Star Online. This application allows workers to complete the Star Chart with service users on screen, incorporating the scales from the 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 readings 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 organisations and client groups. It is available to organisations using the Outcomes Star for an annual licence fee, which is based on the number of keyworkers and managers using the Star.

For more information about the Star Online go to www.staronline.org.uk. You can sign up for an account or the 30-day free trial.

Homeless Link members in the United Kingdom may want to use the Outcomes Star System, an alternative web application similar to the Star Online but solely for the Outcomes Star in homelessness. This was developed and funded as part of the London Housing Foundation Impact through Outcomes programme and is free to Homeless Link members. See www.outcomesstarsystem.org.uk for more information.

In addition, the Outcomes Star for homelessness and other versions are available within the In-Form Client Relationship and Service Management System from Homeless Link: www.homeless.org.uk/in-form.

This Organisation Guide

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

Training and consultancy

It is essential that workers receive training before using the Outcomes Star and most organisations could benefit from consultancy support with the implementation process.

Triangle provides training and support for all versions of the Star, including 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.

Homeless Link also offers both in-house and open training and consultancy support for member organisations in the UK implementing the Outcomes Star for homelessness. For more information see www.homeless.org.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 Outcomes 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.

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1 Review your reasons for introducing the Outcomes 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 Outcomes Star™ is suitable for you

Firstly, you will need to be confident that the Outcomes 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.

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We set out to use the Outcomes Star to measure outcomes because we wanted to gather outcomes data. We have ended up with an improved keywork system!

Simon Community, Dublin
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 Outcomes 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 Outcomes Star.

Your service may aim to help clients make changes in areas that are not included in the Outcomes 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 being appropriately and sustainably housed 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 Outcomes 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 Outcomes Star for homelessness is the best version for your service, check out the Outcomes Star website – www.outcomesstar.org.uk – to see what other versions are available. This version is used widely in a range of services working with vulnerable people including but not exclusively homelessness services. However, 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 of the Outcomes Star website.
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 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 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.

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

The Outcomes 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 you will need to amend existing paperwork.

When to use the Outcomes 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.

Comparing the first and last Star will give a clear picture of the outcomes for that person.
Can it replace other paperwork?

The Outcomes Star may partially replace needs assessment and review paperwork, and action or support plans in a service; it is not intended to duplicate the paperwork an organisation requires service users and workers to complete. 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 services will need to continue to gather this information during assessment.

Further, the Outcomes Star for homelessness shows change in a client’s attitude and behaviour in the ten outcome areas covered but does not capture statistics about client move-on, for instance, the number of people successfully moving into appropriate accommodation, or the number facing eviction, imprisonment or abandonment. Services therefore need to gather this information as part of assessment in addition to completing the Star. Many organisations may find they also need to complete 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?

Star data can be captured and used to produce reports using a number of web applications and client management systems:

- The Star Online is the official Outcomes Star application, run by Triangle, and all versions of the Star, including the Outcomes Star for homelessness, are available to account holders for an annual licence fee – [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk)
- The In-Form system, run by Homeless Link, includes the Outcomes Star for homelessness and some other versions of the Star.

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 like to have a copy. Even when using a paper-based system, it is also necessary to enter the Star readings onto an IT system so that the information can be summarised and analysed for a whole organisation or project.

It is sometimes also possible to add the Outcomes Star readings to an existing IT system to run reports, following good practice guidelines from Triangle. A licence is required to do this. If you are considering this, please visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk) or email info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to discuss a licence and good practice.

5 Train staff to use the Outcomes 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.

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 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.

The Outcomes Star measurement system has generated a considerable amount of interest within the sector and we view it as an example of positive practice in relation to tracking individual development and progress against multiple vulnerabilities.

Audit Commission
March 2006
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 Analyse and interpret the data

You can draw on your Star data in two ways:

- As part of routine monitoring of the service
- To carry out in-depth research into the effectiveness of services

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 two pages 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.
Table 1: Starting points, change and end points

This table shows the average reading in each of the Star areas, as in the Star below:

- At the first reading, averaged across all service users
- At the review point, for example, after six months
- The amount of change between assessment and review (outcomes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star area</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and taking responsibility</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care and living skills</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing money and administration</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks and relationships</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and alcohol misuse</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and mental health</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful use of time</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing tenancy and accommodation</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: The average across two readings displayed visually on the Star (data taken from Table 1)