Outcomes Star™
Data Guide

Guidance for using Outcomes Star data for service management, service development and reporting to stakeholders

1 Introduction

This guide is designed to cover all aspects of Outcomes Star data – the role it can play for services and service users, the journey organisations go on when using Star data for the first time, and how it can be used. This guide is for practitioners, managers, data analysts, trustees, funders or evaluators – any professional with an interest in Outcomes Star data.

Alongside this guide, Triangle have developed many other tools, guides and briefings around the topic of Star data. Where other resources are available, they are referenced in this document.

For support with any aspect of this document, other resources, Star data or the Outcomes Star generally, please contact Triangle – info@triangleconsulting.co.uk or +44(0)207 272 8765. More information is available on our website www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Contents

2 Introducing Outcomes Star™ data

2.1   What is Star data?

Star data is the outcomes data captured when any version of the Outcomes Star is completed with a service user by a frontline practitioner, or by a frontline practitioner or service user on their own.

Each version of the Outcomes Star consists of a number of relevant outcome areas presented in the shape of a Star. Each outcome area is broken down into a numerical scale, with each numerical value defined as a step or stage in a Journey of Change. The Journey of Change breaks down how complex change happens, creating a consistent and objective framework by which to measure the changes somebody is making in their life. The Star and the Journey of Change do not purely measure the severity of an issue – they measure the relationship somebody has to issues in that area of their life and what actions they are taking to cope with or resolve those issues.

Together, a service user and keyworker collaboratively complete a Star. When, after a period of time, the Star reading is reviewed, and another reading completed, a rich source of co-reported, distance-travelled data relating to key outcome areas is created.

Star data can help to provide insights into what is happening in service delivery at a range of levels of an organisation. From the front-line where a service manager might review the Stars completed by a single worker in depth, to senior management levels where a senior team might review aggregated data from hundreds or thousands of Stars. Whilst the approach might differ at these different ends of the continuum the purpose is always to learn and to improve outcomes for service users.

The Outcomes Star is a validated outcomes measure, as research into the psychometric properties of the Outcomes Star has shown that it performs well. Triangle can provide information on the psychometrics of many Stars, with new research being developed all the time. More detail about the psychometric evidence behind the Star and new research can be found on our website www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

2.2   Shifting the focus with Star data

Using the Star and Star data works best when it is part of an organisation practice to take an outcomes-led approach to service delivery. This can often be a culture change process, which involves shifting the focus of attention throughout the organisation from **what the service does** to **what changes for the service user as a result**.

This takes time, but the benefits reach far beyond the collection of a new type of data.

This shift from a service-focus to user-focus is summarised in the table opposite.

Service-focused	User focused
Focus on service deliverer	Focus on service user
Focus on how you deliver services	Focus on how service user changes
Focus on quality of services	Focus on effectiveness of services
Emphasis on improving quality	Emphasis on improving effectiveness
Measure amount of what you do	Measure benefit of what you do
Evidence of activities (weak case with funders)	Evidence of results (strong case with funders)
The task is never finished (and so staff get de-motivated)	Clients achieve goals (which is motivating for staff and service users)
Service specified in terms of what is offered and intended outcome	Service specified in terms of service user need

2.3   Context, curiosity and learning

The clearer an organisation is about its objectives and the questions it is seeking to answer, the more helpful the Star data is likely to be, although Star data on its own will not provide final answers. It is best seen as one piece of a puzzle and it is only when combined with the other pieces that a full picture will emerge. The other pieces of the puzzle include:

- Output data – how many or how often the service has been delivered and to who

- Information on service user satisfaction

- Intelligence on service quality (both from process measures and experience of visiting the service)

- Knowledge of the context of service delivery including changes in services available, the local economy etc

Together with this data and contextual knowledge, Star data can support a process of on-going learning and development:
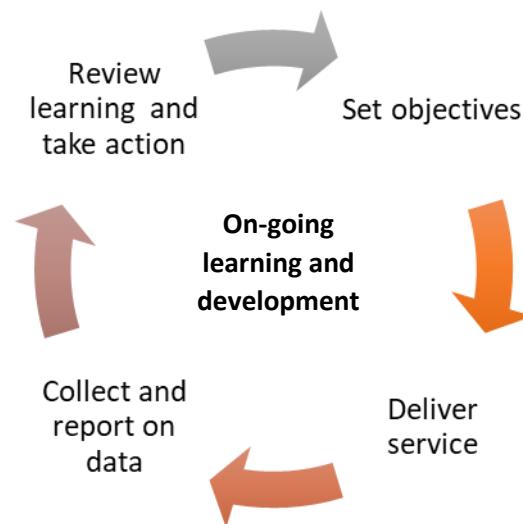
With Star data, services can ask more and more focused questions about what is happening with the people they support. For example, if one service shows different outcomes to another service, this is a starting point for further investigation. You may want to ask:

- Is there other evidence that one service achieves better outcomes than another (eg looking at service user accounts, service manager views, other hard 'process' outcomes such as numbers in caseload)?

- Are there obvious reasons why one service might be better than another (eg better facilities or more referral options for supporting specialist services)?

- Is the service user profile different in the different services (eg more service users with combined complex needs such as drug and mental health issues, or older/younger service users)?

- Is practice significantly different in that service and therefore might there be lessons for other services to learn?

Star data will offer the greatest benefits when used in the spirit of curiosity and learning.

Individual change is complex and impacted by many factors, some of them in the control of the service provider or service user, some not. This means that simplistic interpretation or black and white target setting may work against learning and service effectiveness.

Star data is not intended to be used for the performance management of key-workers or their team leaders. The reason for this is that there are many factors outside the key-worker or team leader's control that are likely to have an impact on service user outcomes. In addition, evidence around the use of outcome measures generally indicates that target-setting and linking payments or other benefits to the achievement of certain metrics distorts service delivery and the way that the metric is used. The Outcomes Star can be used in Payment by Results schemes if used thoughtfully alongside other metrics. We have examples of it being used successfully within this context and can provide support and guidance to any funders, commissioners or service providers considering using the Outcome Star in this way.

2.4   The difference between routine monitoring and academic research

The Outcomes Stars are designed to be used as part of routine practice to support key-work, service management, service improvement and accountability. The Star helps to answer questions about this service such as:

- Are service users making progress?

- Is more being achieved in some areas than others?

It is important to distinguish this from formal research which is designed to answer questions about a particular type of intervention generically, such as:

- Is this type of intervention effective?

- What conditions need to be in place for it to work?

In such formal research it is important to investigate causality – can any change that takes place be attributed to the intervention or would it have happened anyway without the intervention? This is where approaches like the Randomised Controlled Trial come in to play as a way of comparing an intervention group with a control group.

We believe that although it is important that research like this is carried out it is not appropriate to expect every service to be meet the exacting standards of formal academic research. Health care provides a helpful parallel - clinical trials are carried out to assess the effectiveness of a procedure or drug. Once this has been established it is made available. Every medic or hospital using that procedure or drug is not expected to perform a clinical trial, though routine monitoring of outcomes is good practice.

Similarly examining questions like cost savings as a result of service provision is best carried out in research settings so that others can then draw on that information and apply it to their service. In our view it is not appropriate to expect every service provider to carry out primary cost benefit analysis as part of their routine work.

3   The Star data journey

3.1 The importance of effective Star implementation

Whilst the key-work benefits of the Star can be achieved immediately following training, the data benefits require all the elements of implementing the Outcomes Star to be in place, and so can be a more challenging task.

Essential ingredients of Star implementation include having full engagement from team leaders and having an effective software solution in place – more information about Star implementation can be found on our website, including our Star-like tool, the Implementation Tracker.

One key aspect of implementation is for services to be equipped with a way to record and analyse Star data. We offer an intuitive online system specifically to support effective use of the Star (www.staronline.org.uk) and licences to include Star functionality in third-party approved software and case management systems. We also offer licences for services to use the Star on paper and create their own spreadsheets. Whichever solution is right for the service, it is important that staff understand how to use the system and that it supports collaborative completion of Stars using the Journey of Change and scale descriptions.

In addition to software, the journey to using Star data is likely to be different for each organisation depending on their particular assets and challenges, but it is likely to involve all of the following:

- Implementing the Star as a keyworking tool for frontline practitioners – including training on how to engage service users and how to record outcomes data accurately using the Journey of Change, and building engagement around the tool with managers, senior managers and other stakeholders

- Developing initial data reports – which can throw up questions and highlight implementation issues

- Implementation and quality assurance work through team leaders

- Further work to refine data reports at service and organisational level

- Learning how to get the right reports to the right people and supporting managers to use them

- Supporting action on learning at team leader and senior manager level

3.2 An organisation-wide project

To achieve the benefits set out in the previous section, Star data must be understood, shared and used by:

- Worker and service user - to take an overview of the service user's position and identify priorities and actions

- Team leader and worker/team - support reflection and clinical supervision, practice development and enable learning and service improvement

- Senior management and external stakeholders – to take an overview of performance across the organisation and support learning and service improvement

- Implementation Manager or whomever has responsibility for introducing the Star to the organisation - to monitor the implementation of the Star

- Others, such as training and development teams and analysts focusing on data, impact and reporting

This means that using Star data well is a whole organisations project and one that requires engagement and an understanding of what the Star is, how it works and what it measures at all levels.

Star data is most informative when Star data is also used in the place closest to where it was collected - by the keyworker and service user and by the team leader. At these levels there is plenty of contextual information to support interpretation and the data has not been aggregated to such a high level that nuances and variations are lost.

The data is also useful at higher levels but the further the distance from where the data was collected, the more tentative the conclusions must be and the more important it is that it is triangulated with other data and with conversations with those closer to the source of collection.

The more Star data is used the more checks and balances there will be on data quality and so the more useful it is likely to be at all levels. For example, if the team leader is regularly reviewing the Stars that their workers are completing with service users then they will be able to pick up if Stars are not completed in the correct time-scales or if the readings recorded are not accurate. See below for more information about managing the quality of Star data.

3.3 Roles for getting the most out of your data

Working with a wide variety of different organisations, we have identified three key roles around Star data:

A data 'fixer' – to ensure data completeness and quality

They are leading how the Star is implemented in an organisation (or are part of a steering group or project team) and regularly review the data to assess whether it is complete and credible. They will also follow up with relevant people when the review highlights issues.

A data analyst – to manipulate data and create charts and tables

For users of the Star Online, the system will provide basic reports without needing any expertise in data reporting. Often, the person who is the 'Star Lead' for an organisation's Star Online account will be best placed to create reports (as they have broad access to all data in each account.) For more advanced reports, organisations will also need someone with reasonable Microsoft Excel skills (Star data can be downloaded from the Star Online into an Excel spreadsheet/CSV file.) Triangle have resources to support people with this.

For organisations with basic licences, they will need someone with basic Microsoft Excel skills to set up and manage a spreadsheet for entering and analysing data. Triangle has resources to guide people on how to do this. For more advanced reports, the need is the same as above.

For organisations using the Star in third-party approved software systems, the skill needed will depend on how the system works. Someone in the organisation will need to liaise with the software provider around the reports that are needed, and Triangle can support organisations with this.

A learning leader – to take insight from the data and use this for learning and service improvement

This is someone who can identify where and when Star data should be reports, who can ensure that reports are prepared in time for meetings and put on the agenda, and who can identify learnings from the reports and agree actions that can be followed up.

In some organisations, these roles may all be done by one person, or they may be split across one team, or across different teams.

3.4   Quality assuring Star data

The quality of information from analysis of Star data is only as good as the quality of data input into recording system in the first place. This starts by ensuring that workers are trained to use the Outcomes Star (a requirement of a licence to access and use the Outcomes Stars), that the implementation of the Star is well managed and timed, and that clear, service-specific guidelines are developed about when the Star is to be used and how the data will be recorded.

For the next steps, team leaders are key. They are the lynchpin of effective Star implementation and the quality control and effective use of Star data. They are in the best position to ensure that:

- Stars are used in supervision and as part of that, the manager is checking that the Star readings are appropriate for the service user

- Keyworkers are able to put their Star training and keywork skills in to practice, and appropriately challenge service users about where they are on the Journey of Change

- Stars are used in team meetings. A good way to build consistency within the team is for one member of the team to present a current service user and the team to discuss the appropriate reading for that service user on each domain of the Star

- Stars are regularly included in case audits, and 'spot checks' to review completed Stars alongside other information

- Star data reports or snapshots can be incorporated into regular meetings across the organisation, ensuring that aggregated Star data is shared with keyworkers as well as senior managers or other stakeholders

See section 4.5 and 4.6 of this document for more information around how team managers can use Outcomes Star data.   Triangle are developing a range of tools and resources to support organisations in quality assuring their Star data – please contact us or visit our website for more information.

One set of tools are the Scale Checkers – these are a service user profile, relevant for a specific version of the Outcomes Star, with short summary of the service user, the evidence per scale/outcome area on the Star, and extensively tested, correct readings for each scale based on that evidence.


Completing the Scale Checker allows workers to test their understanding of the Journey of Change and their ability to apply it accurately when presented with service user information and evidence.   There are currently Scale Checkers available for a limited number of Outcomes Star versions (with more in development) and they are available free of charge to licensed Star users.

4 Introduction to using Star data

4.1 Uses of Star data

In the same way that management accounts give an organisation a picture of how they are performing against expectations financially, Star data (alongside other information such as service user satisfaction surveys, and 'hard' outcome indicators) can help give a similar handle on how the organisation is performing against expectations in terms of service delivery.

The Star can provide insight and evidence at many levels, as shown in the triangle opposite and table below, as individual service user data can be aggregated and averaged to give an overall picture.
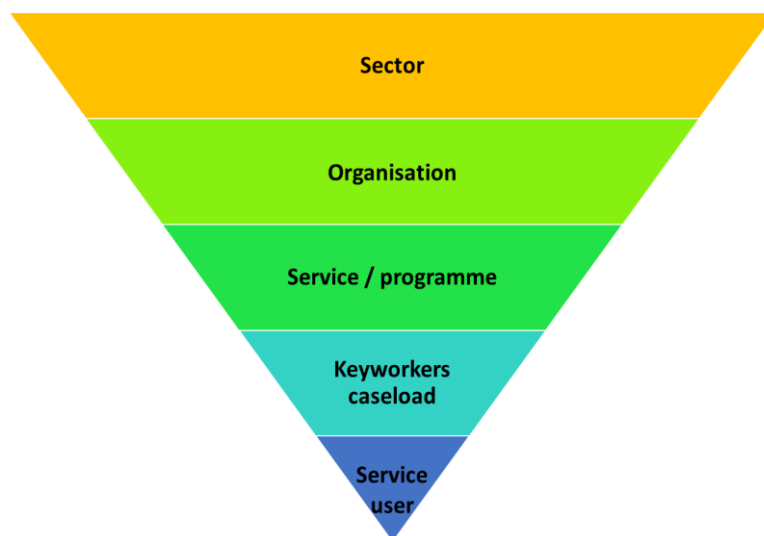
The table below outlines some of the settings in which Star data can be used in an organisation and how it can be used in these settings to give valuable insights:

Setting	Service user and keyworker	Manager and keyworker	Managers and internal and external stakeholders	Project manager for Star implementation
Reasons for using Star data	• Motivating to see where change has taken place • Identifying areas to focus on for the future	• Supporting supervision and reflective practice • Motivating to see where change has taken place • Learning what is working well and where things can be improved in the future	• Demonstrating and evidencing the impact that has been achieved with individuals and across a service • Learning what is working well and where things can be improved in the future	• Tracking how the Star is being implemented and checking if it is being used well within services

The following sections include examples of some of the ways Star data can be analysed and presented, including basic and advanced reports.

How to create these reports will depend on the system and software used for Star data. In this section we explain the standard reports that can be created with Triangle's online web app, the Star Online, and a series of advanced reports that can be created with custom data analysis in Excel or other software.

More detailed instructions and resources are available from Triangle on uses of Star data. For more information and support with Star data analysis, please contact us.

4.2 General guidance when analysing Star data

Clean your data as a first step

Whichever software system you use to record and analyse Star data, it is likely you will need to complete an initial step of 'data cleaning' on your Star data set.

Likely areas to look out for include:

- Service users without two Star readings (if you want to show change over time)
- Duplicate Stars with the same readings completed on the same date
- Incorrect dates – such as second Stars dated before first Stars

Triangle are developing more guidance around this simple step – contact us for more information.

Means are the simplest approach but not always the most helpful

Means are a very simple and straightforward way of summarising Star data that everyone can understand. The fact that they can be plotted onto a Star chart also makes them a simple and intuitive way of summarising a lot of data. However, there are a number of limitations in using the mean:

- The mean doesn't tell you anything about the variation. A mean change of 1 can result from most people making a change of around 1, or from some people making a very large amount of progress and others staying the same or moving back

- One way of addressing this is to present change data in a bar chart where the height of the column represents the percentage of people making a positive change and the width represents the average amount of positive change

- People who start higher up the scale can't make as much progress as people who start lower down. People who start at 10 can't make any progress at all

- The consequence of this is that if a lot of people are starting at 9 or 10 on a scale, the mean change will be small – possibly masking high levels of change in those that started with a significant need in this area. This issue can be address by excluding those starting at 10 (or those starting at 7 or 8 and above) from the analysis (see below)

From a more theoretical point of view, Outcomes Star data is ordinal data which means the size of the step between 1 and 2 isn't necessarily the same as the size of the step between 2 and 3 (the opposite is continuous data where the size between each step is the same – like on a ruler). The mean assumes that the distance between the points is the same and therefore from a theoretical point of view is not the most appropriate metric.

Percentage improving can give a more accurate picture

This can be broken down by outcome area (e.g. '75% of service users improved in the Physical health area') or by starting point (e.g. '90% of service users starting at Trying or below improved'). It is also possible to hone in on particular outcome areas or starting points to give a more detailed picture. This requires knowing what the key things are that you are interested in (see Reporting against expectations section below). For example, you might focus in on three particular points on the Star, or on people who start at 1 or 2, or people starting between 1 and 6.

Excluding high starters can give a better picture of change

Because those with higher readings have a smaller amount of potential change (or none for those starting at the top of the scale), data based on all readings can make change look smaller than it really is. In addition, early indications from studies completed by Triangle[1] is that those at earlier stages of the Journey are more likely to progress. For these reasons it can be helpful to exclude high starters (for example those starting at 7 or above on a 10-point scale) from some analyses.

Statements can make the data more meaningful

For example, rather than saying that x % of service users started at 3 or below and moved to 4 or above, that can be crafted as a sentence for example "6 young people (43%) who were struggling to look after their health when they completed their first Star progressed to at least looking after their health well enough with support"

Benchmarking helps give the data context

It can be difficult to know how to interpret Star data. Even when you can show positive change, it can leave people with the question – is that a good amount of change?   Comparisons are helpful in adding context to aid interpretation.

For example, you can compare:

a) Over time periods (eg how do outcomes for people who joined the service in 2015 compare to outcomes for people who joined in 2016)

b) Between different service user groups (eg men and women, under 25s and over 25s)

c) Between similar services within your organisation

d) Between similar services in other organisations

e) With your own goals and expectations (see 'Reporting against expectations' below)

The Star Online will create internal comparison tables and enable you to compare outcomes in your service to outcomes for the same Star across the whole of the Star Online database. However, we advise that you approach this with caution as you may not be comparing like with like. We believe that benchmarking is most helpful when done in the context of a benchmarking club where organisations can ensure that services and service users are comparable and discuss reasons for the differences they find. Triangle can support organisations with this process and connect comparable services, please contact us for more information.

Reporting against expectations reduces complexity and ensures relevance

The most accurate way to report Star data is in detail – to report the percentage of service users starting at each point on each scale and moving to every other point on that scale. However, for a 10-point Star with a 10-point scale, this would give 1000 different pieces of data – which is an unmanageable amount. The alternative of summarising the data can remove important variation.

---

[1] Triangle's Study of Advanced Star Data Reporting, 2017

Another approach which makes it possible to summarise without losing relevance is to identify for yourself what 'good' looks like for your organisation and then report how many service users met those expectations.

For example, you might decide that an appropriate level of starting need is that people have a reading of 6 or less on at least two domains. You can then report what percentage of service users meet this criterion.

You might decide that for your service success means that the person has moved up by two points on two particular scales, or that they had reached at least 8 on one particular scale. You can then report how many service users meet this criterion.

This approach to service management can be equated to ways that organisations managed finances – ie agreeing service expectations is like setting a budget and reporting against these expectations is like reporting financial performance against budget.
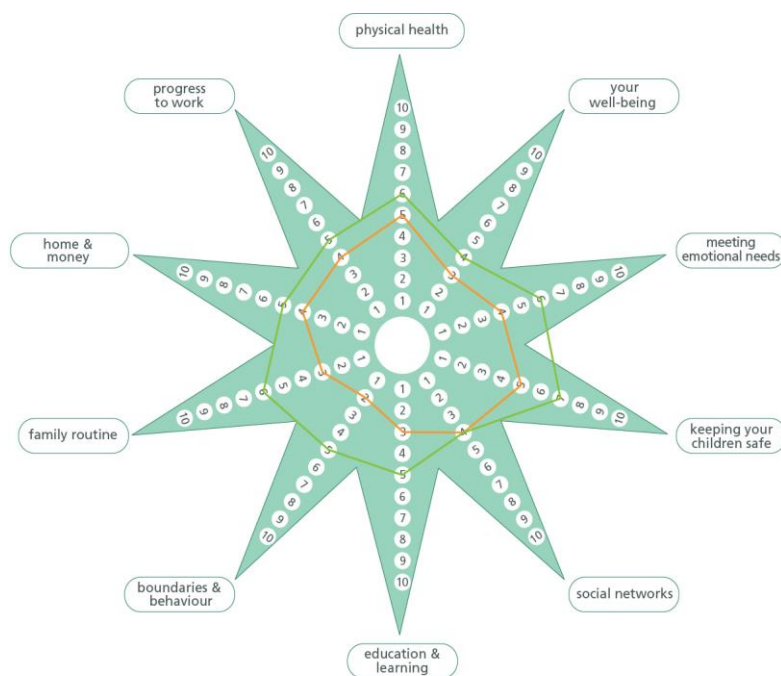
5 Examples for how Star data can be used

5.1 Using Star data in keywork

The completed Star can be used in the key-work session to provide an overview of the person's current situation and as a basis for talking about priorities and goals.

Once two or more Stars have completed, the change can be plotted on the Star, and used to support reflection, build motivation and provide insight for further actions.

5.1.1. Example using Family Star Plus™ data with Paula, a service user

A fictional example, based on real life information. Paula is a parent receiving support from her local council's Early Help service.

Family Star Plus™ © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd
Authors: Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith
www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Paula joined the service after a referral from her children's school. She has two children aged 13 and 15. They have not been attending school, and both have received warnings from the local police.

Paula met with the Family Support co-ordinator and together they completed her first Star (**orange line**.) This highlighted that Paula was struggling specifically with boundaries and behaviour, and wanted to make changes in several other areas. Together, they created an action plan focused on those areas, whilst the co-ordinator also took the initiative in sharing ideas with Paula around managing behaviour.

3 months later, Paula completed her second Star (**green line**), and could see that she had made improvements in many areas, particularly with boundaries and behaviour.

With the Star Online application, you can create Star reports for service users showing up to 3 different sets of Star readings over time. These can be displayed on screen or easily turned these into PDFs for printing out or downloading into other records.

5.2 Using Star data to provide evidence of outcomes (standard reports)

Star data can help answer questions about the extent to which service users, supported by a service, have made positive change in their lives. This data can be presented in regular reports to a funder or board of Trustees, in annual impact reports, or in funding applications to demonstrate the impact of a service.

Two basic tables can be easily created in the Star Online system, providing a basic level of outcomes reporting.

5.2.1. Example of standard report showing change achieved in each outcome area

The difference between mean or median scores on each outcome area at the beginning of the intervention (initial Star) and at a specified later time point (review, final or most recent Star) with the Homelessness Star

	Initial reading (average)	Most recent reading (average)	Change (average)
Motivation and taking responsibility	3.4	4.5	1.1
Self-care and living skills	3.7	4.8	1.1
Managing money and administration	3.8	4.3	0.5
Social networks and relationships	3.4	4.2	0.8
Drug and alcohol misuse	3.0	5.1	2.1
Physical health	4.8	6.3	1.5
Emotional and mental health	3.9	3.5	-0.4
Meaningful use of time	3.6	3.7	0.1
Managing tenancy and accommodation	2.8	4.6	1.8
Offending	5.1	6.7	1.6
Average	**3.8**	**4.8**	**1.0**

5.2.2. Example of standard report showing proportion of service users making progress or not

Number or percentage of service users improving, going backwards and staying put. In each of the outcome areas this table shows the percentage of service users who dropped back, the percentage who stayed the same and the percentage who made positive progress – with the Homelessness Star

	Decrease (dropped back)	No change (stayed the same)	Increase (made positive progress)
Motivation and taking responsibility	12%	13%	75%
Self-care and living skills	5%	29%	66%
Managing money and administration	17%	23%	60%
Social networks and relationships	23%	6%	71%
Drug and alcohol misuse	10%	17%	73%
Physical health	21%	32%	47%
Emotional and mental health	35%	35%	30%
Meaningful use of time	31%	19%	50%
Managing tenancy and accommodation	12%	8%	80%
Offending	11%	24%	65%

When presenting these tables, it is good practice to also present a simple report outlining what data is included in the tables. These are automatically provided within the Star Online system and include:
- How many Stars and service users are included
- Which service or services the data relates to
- The time period covered
- Details of any data excluded from the report (eg service user only readings)

Using the standard reports can help services explore the evidence at a slightly deeper level:

- Are there particular services that have better or worse outcomes? (By comparing services within an organisation)

- Are there particular outcome domains where improvement tends to be greater or lesser? (By comparing outcome areas shown on Table 1 or 2)

- Are there particular service user groups who tend to do better or worse? (By filtering the report by different service user criteria – age, gender, ethnicity, characteristics/support needs)

Detailed instructions for how to create these reports with the Star Online are available, please visit the Star Online's knowledge base or contact Triangle for more information. These basic reports and guidance on how to interpret them are also included in the core Star training that all workers complete before being licensed to use the Star with service users.

5.3 Using Star data as part of team management (standard reports)

Star data can provide a valuable source of information for team leaders, supporting managers with clinical supervision of staff, and in turn reinforcing good Star practice across a team (see the next section 4.6 for more information on managing Star practice and implementation.)

For example, a team leader can use the Star Online, paper-based Stars or other systems to 'audit' individual service user Stars. This is helpful to do within the context of supervision, to explore whether the readings are appropriate, whether the worker is comfortable constructively challenging service users, and if the worker understands the Journey of Change and how to apply it. This can then help a team leader to assess if the right interventions are taking place with a service user, and if a service user is being supported in a person-centred, strengths-based way.

In addition, for services using the Star Online, the basic reports set out in section 4.4 can be created at the caseload level, showing the average starting readings for service users, the average of change achieved in each outcome area, and the % of service users making progress or not. Although the Star should not be used as a blunt performance management tool (see Section 2.3 Context, Curiosity and Learning) they can be used by a team leader to explore what the overall balance of a person's caseload is like and any strengths or challenges across the different outcome areas.

5.4 Using Star data to manage Star implementation (standard and advanced reports)

An obvious use of Star data is to monitor keywork activity and policy compliance around implementation, which can be useful for team leaders or people project managing the introduction and implementation of the Outcomes Star in an organisation.

For example, Star data can show:

- Number of Stars completed (is everyone who should have a Star getting one?)

- When Stars are completed (are they happening at the right time?)

- If Stars are being completed collaboratively or not (if not, why not? Are Worker Only Stars being done?)

- Other service user data (are the right dates being entered? Are other fields being completed?)

5.4.1. Examples using Star data to monitor implementation of the Outcomes Star

Including suggestions for how this data could be interpreted by a service:

How many Stars were completed?

1ˢᵗ Stars	Review Stars
330	203 (70%)

A question you could ask of this table:
Are Stars being completed for all service users who should have them? If not, why not?

How this data could be used in a service:
In this service only 70% of initial Star readings were reviewed, meaning that information about service user progression was not available for 30% of service users. To resolve this the service could hold meetings with service managers to investigate why some service users were only completing one Star and put measures in place to increase the number of Stars reviewed in future.

How many first Stars were completed collaboratively?

Collaborative	Worker only	Client only
214 (65%)	109 (33%)	7 (2%)

A question you could ask of this table:
Are enough readings being completed collaboratively between worker and service user?

How this data could be used in a service:
This report shows that only 65% of first Star readings were completed collaboratively. As the Star is designed to be completed collaboratively between worker and service user, this is a low percentage. To resolve this, team managers could discuss the reasons for this during supervision sessions with practitioners. It may be that workers are not finding enough time to complete the Star collaboratively along with other assessment paperwork that they need to complete with service users. In response the service could look at the paper work that needs completing, remove any duplication, and therefore streamline their assessment process.

For more examples with suggested interpretations, please see Triangle's 'Outcomes Star Key Findings Guide.'
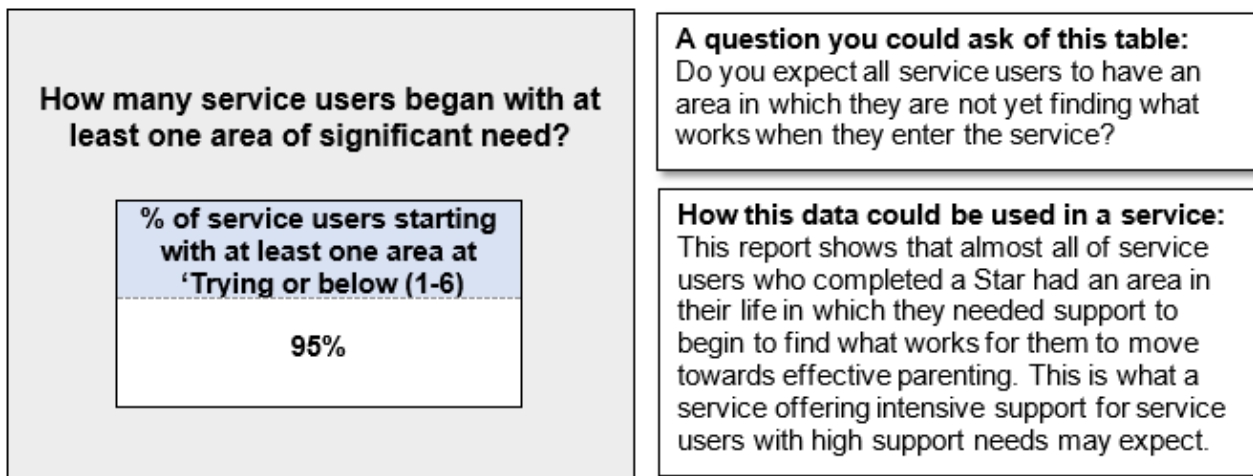
For services using the Star Online, the raw data downloads and options to 'View colleagues' and look at 'My services' can be used for insights into implementation. They enable managers to look at how many first Stars are being completed, whether second Stars are being completed within the intended timeframe and what the range of starting scores are.

5.5 Using Star data to understand service referral and discharge (advanced reports)

This analysis is helpful for identifying whether you are taking the right people into the service and whether needs are changing over time.

5.5.1. Example showing analysis of first Star readings across the Journey of Change

Including suggestions for how this could be analysed by a service:

How many service users began with at least one area of significant need?

% of service users starting with at least one area at 'Trying or below (1-6)
95%

A question you could ask of this table: Do you expect all service users to have an area in which they are not yet finding what works when they enter the service?

How this data could be used in a service: This report shows that almost all of service users who completed a Star had an area in their life in which they needed support to begin to find what works for them to move towards effective parenting. This is what a service offering intensive support for service users with high support needs may expect.

How were service users distributed across the Journey of Change?

This graph shows the percentage of service users at each journey of change stage from their first Star readings
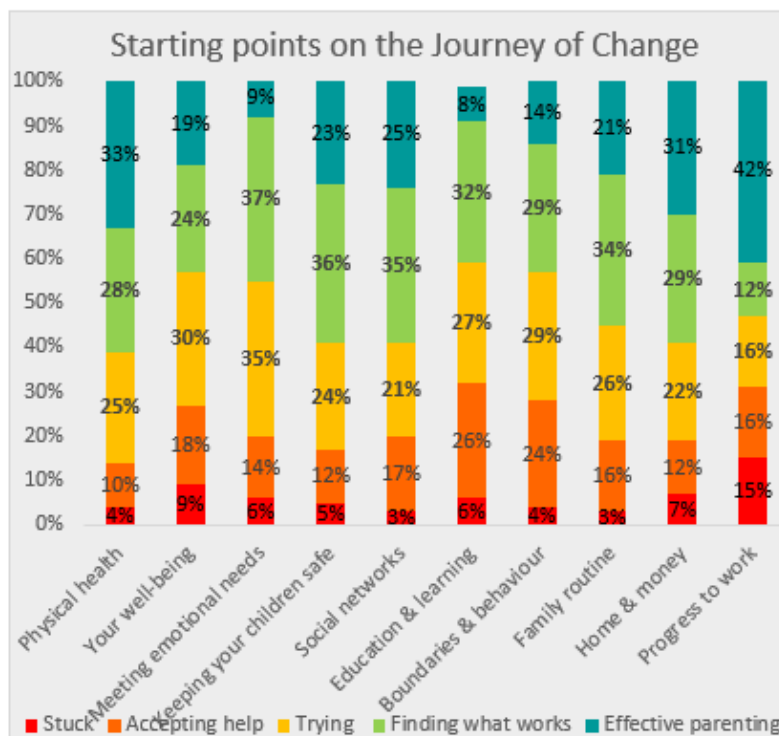
Questions you could ask of this table: Is the organisation working with the right cohort of service users - does their level of need match the service objectives? Are initial Star readings higher than expected?

How this data could be used in a service: This graph shows that only 41% of service users have readings at 'Trying' or below for the area Keeping your children safe. If a service deals with safeguarding daily they may be surprised by this result and decide to give further training to staff to help spot any safeguarding concerns early on and to confidently challenge service users on this Star area.

5.6 Using Star data to evidence achievement and identify improvements (advanced reports)

Star data is very rich and whilst the basic reports provide a good starting point, there is much more learning that can be drawn. The following are examples of some of the ways of analysing and presenting data under these headings.

For a fuller set of possible ways to present Star data, see 'Triangle Study into advanced Star data reports 2016' or Triangle's Outcomes Star Key Findings Guide.

5.6.1. Example of analysing change – displayed in a table

This analysis excludes service users starting with high readings/low levels of need. It includes suggestions for how this could be analysed by a service:

How did service users with lower starting points do?

This table shows service users' with initial readings at 1-6 (i.e. not yet finding what works) average first and final Star readings and their average change in each Star area.

Service users 1-6 at start Red = lowest, Green = highest	First	Final	Change
All areas	4.84	6.37	1.52
Physical health	4.68	6.60	1.93
Your well-being	4.29	6.04	1.75
Meeting emotional needs	4.63	6.38	1.75
Keeping your children safe	4.48	6.17	1.69
Social networks	4.27	6.36	2.09
Education and learning	4.29	6.18	1.98
Boundaries and behaviour	4.38	6.13	1.75
Family routine	4.55	6.33	1.78
Home and money	4.13	6.03	1.90
Progress to work	3.40	5.24	1.84

A question you could ask of this table: In which outcome areas are service users with high support needs making the most and least change and why might different areas vary?

How this data could be used in a service: The report shows that 44% of service users with more than one Star reading have initial readings at 1-6 in the area Social networks and that these service users have a higher average change in this area, in comparison to the other areas. The report shows that service users' lowest average change is in the area Keeping your children safe with 46% of service users, with more than one Star reading, with initial low Star readings (1-6). In response to this a service may decide to invest more resources into training in this area for staff and introduce more procedures and guidance about safeguarding.

5.6.2. Example of analysing change, by Journey of Change stage

Including suggestions for how this could be analysed by a service:

How many service users moved forward or backwards from each JoC stage?

This shows the percentage of service users progressing forward (green bars) or back (red bars) at least one Journey of Change stage from each starting stage by their final Star.

What percentage of service users moved forward or backwards from specific JoC stages?

Stuck: 73% moved forward
Accepting help: 68% moved forward, -10% slipped back
Trying: 58% moved forward, -14% slipped back
Finding what works: 30% moved forward, -17% slipped back
Effective parenting: -28% slipped back

Slipped back / Moved forward

A question you could ask of this table:

Are the number of service users moving forward from each Journey of Change stage what you would expect?

How this data could be used in a service:
The report shows that averaged across outcome areas, 73% of service users starting at Stuck moved forward at least one Journey of Change stage. A service might interpret this as service users showing showed good engagement and this could be a good statistic to use in an impact report. In contract, a service may be disappointed that the data showed only 30% of those starting at Finding what works moving forward to Effective parenting and 17% slipping backwards. Change may be harder to achieve the further up the journey service users are but this report might suggest a service should investigate the reasons some service users slipped back or didn't move at all from this stage in order to improve service performance in future

5.6.3. Example of analysing change, by using a threshold appropriate to service context

Including suggestions for how this could be analysed by a service:

How many service users progressed to at least parenting well enough with support?

The table below shows the number and percentage of service users who progressed to parenting well enough with support if necessary (moving from below 8 at their first Star to 8+):

Red = lowest, Green = highest	No. starting below 8	No. moving to 8+	% moving to 8+
Physical health	116	15	44%
Your well-being	147	44	30%
Meeting emotional needs	153	49	32%
Keeping your children safe	129	50	39%
Social networks	125	45	36%
Education and learning	158	57	36%
Boundaries and behaviour	161	48	30%
Family routine	135	57	42%
Home and money	118	36	31%
Progress to work	107	31	29%

A question you could ask of this table: How is the organisation performing against set thresholds?

How this data could be used in a service: This report is useful where a service has identified that their commissioners are interested in how many service users get to a certain point on the Star by their final reading. In this example, the service is looking at how many service users were at least doing well enough with support in each Star area by their final reading. They can see that the area Progress to work showed only 29% of parents who were not ready for work progressing to being ready and able to work (with support if needed). The service may identify that they lack resources to run specific ETE programs and so rely on referring service users to external services, to address this area. In response to this, the commissioner and organisation may investigate the resources needed to implement a job skills program in the future.