



# VIP Star™

The Outcomes Star for people with a visual impairment

“ 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 report 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

Want to use this tool?  
Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

olistic approach  
l direction to the  
port

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

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
020 7272 8765

Developed by Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith with Sandra Greaves  
Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise

## Published by

Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd  
The Dock Hub  
Wilbury Villas  
Hove  
BN3 6AH  
United Kingdom

Copyright © 2013 Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise

All rights reserved

## Authors

Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith  
with Sandra Greaves  
Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd  
[www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Designed and edited by Jellymould Creative  
[www.jellymouldcreative.com](http://www.jellymouldcreative.com)

Edition 1.1 published April 2017

Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise is the copyright holder of the VIP Star including all the materials in this document. In order to support consistency of use and effective implementation, the creation of derivative works is strictly prohibited and users are required to buy a licence and train all workers using the materials with service users. Licence holders receive access to up-to-date documentation for all relevant Stars including Star Charts, User Guides, Organisation Guides, Scales and Quizzes. Those with licences to use the Star Online system also receive access to online completion, action planning and a range of outcomes reporting options.

Please contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto: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](http://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:

- The Pocklington Trust for initiating this development and collaborating in the development of the pilot version and additional accessibility developments for the Star Online, as well as piloting the VIP Star
- Blind Veterans for additional collaboration in the pilot stage and input to enable us to finalise the VIP Star and accessibility within the Star Online.

**Want to use this tool?**  
**Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)**

**Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)**  
**or 020 7272 8765**

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction to the VIP Star	4
Theoretical foundations	6
Values and assumptions underpinning the VIP Star	7
How the VIP Star was developed	8
VIP Star resources	11
<b>Part 1: Implementing the VIP Star™ in your service or organisation</b>	<b>14</b>
1 Review your reasons for introducing the Star	15
2 Assess the suitability of the VIP Star for your service	15
3 Run a pilot	16
4 Integrate the Star into your ways of working, paperwork and IT	17
5 Train staff to use the Star	19
6 Ensure quality and consistency in the use of the Star	19
7 Analyse and interpret the data	21
7.1 Routine monitoring	21
7.2 In-depth research	25
8 Share and act on the learning	26
<b>Part 2: Guidance for Keyworkers: The Star™ as an integral part of work with service users</b>	<b>27</b>
1 Before you use the VIP Star	28
2 Introducing the Star to service users	28
3 Using the Star scales (Quiz and detailed versions)	30
4 Discussing and completing the VIP Star with service users	31
5 Using the completed Star Chart as the basis for an action plan	32
6 Revisiting the Star	36
7 Frequently asked questions	37

**Want to use this tool?**  
**Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)**

**Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)**  
**or 020 7272 8765**

# Introduction

## Introduction to the VIP Star™

### The Outcomes Star™ for people with visual impairment

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

The Star is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change made across a range of services by people with different needs. It is also a keywork<sup>1</sup> tool that can help service users make changes by providing them with a clear picture of the journey towards greater independence and choice, enabling them to take manageable steps and plot 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. Preview versions of the Stars can all be accessed by signing up, for free, at [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk).

The VIP Star focuses on nine core areas that the development phase determined were critical in enabling people with a visual impairment develop the life skills they need:

1. Managing visual impairment
2. Health
3. Where you live
4. Looking after yourself
5. Meaningful activity
6. Social life
7. Money
8. How you feel
9. Dignity.

For each of these core areas, there is a five-point scale that measures where a person is on their journey towards independence and well-being in that area. We call this model the Journey of Change. For seven of the nine Star areas, it comprises the following steps:

At the beginning of the journey there is some **cause for concern** – maybe the person is at risk, leading a very restricted life or not able to meet their basic needs. There is a risk of harm but they don't want help or simply don't recognise that they need it. Perhaps they feel they are coping fine or don't want to accept that things have changed. Or they may be frightened of losing control. Maybe they are at risk of or experiencing financial or other abuse from a relative, carer or someone else.

1 The term 'keywork' is used in this document to refer to an ongoing one-to-one relationship between a worker and a service user in which the two people take an overview of the person's situation and needs and set goals, make plans for achieving those goals and periodically review progress.

The first change happens when they begin **accepting help**; the situation is still a cause for concern but the person is accepting help to meet their basic needs, ensure their safety or become more independent and able to participate in a wider range of activities. They may be glad to talk or they may be feeling angry or low about their situation and finding it hard to accept changes or new limitations.

They then move on to actively **exploring what's possible**, which may be help, aids, adaptations or technology. At this stage any significant causes of concern have been dealt with and the person is finding and trying new ways of doing things. This can be difficult so they may give up easily or need a lot of support to keep going.

They then start **finding what works**. There may be activities that they used to do that they are starting to do again with the help of support services or they may be finding new ones that work for them. However, they, or you, still want to make improvements to maximise their independence and well-being.

The end of the journey is when they have **maximised their independence and well-being**. They may still need support but this is at the right level to enable them to be as independent as possible while maintaining their safety and well-being. Things will change, so the situation needs to be monitored. But at the moment, life is as good as it can be.

In the Where You Live and Dignity scales, the focus is slightly different. These areas are less about the changes the service user needs to make and more about their circumstances, so the Journey of Change follows these five stages:

1. At the first stage there is **cause for concern** and they do not have help – as in the first stage above
2. The first step forward is **accepting help** – as in the second stage above
3. In the mid-point, there are **no pressing concerns** in relation to the circumstances the person is in, but lots of improvements are needed
4. Things are **mostly OK** but there are still a few things to improve to optimise how things are
5. The end point of the scale is when their circumstances are mostly **as good as they can be**.

Not everyone will start at the beginning of the scales but the aim is that everyone can reach the top of the scales.

**Want to use this tool?**  
**Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)**

**Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)**  
**or 020 7272 8765**

# Theoretical foundations

## 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 methods<sup>2</sup>. 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 training or moving to more suitable housing, 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 VIP 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, on the detail of support needed with practical day-to-day tasks and self-care, or on external circumstances, such as whether a person has a job. 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 seek<sup>3</sup>. Even for those not able to participate actively, due to a learning disability or other needs, the VIP Star is compatible with person-centred planning and personalisation.

## Collaboration

When using the Outcomes Star, the worker and service user assess the service user's needs together, if the service user is able to do so. 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.

Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)

<sup>2</sup> 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)

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

If service users are unable to actively participate in the assessment themselves, the multidisciplinary team that supports them can complete the assessment collaboratively, involving the service user's carers, if this is appropriate. This assessment process is just as likely to involve the individuals in the team gaining new perspectives and developing 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, or multidisciplinary team, as a completed Star. This makes it possible for the service user and worker, or the team, 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 model 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 the same 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 or on the 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.

## Values and assumptions underpinning the VIP Star™

Building on the above, there are a number of specific values and assumptions that underpin the VIP Star.

### Optimising independence

Whatever their age and abilities, there is an optimum level of independence for each person with a visual impairment and services should work with them to achieve this optimum level. Becoming more dependent than is necessary can hasten deterioration in physical functioning and mental and emotional well-being. At the same time it is recognised that many people need services in order to enable them to function and that a lack of services can also put people at risk.

### Maximising well-being through choice and control

People should have as much control as possible over their life and the care they receive and the way their life is organised should reflect their own personal needs and preferences. It is also recognised that in some cases it is necessary for someone to hand over control of certain aspects of their life to others. In this case it is vital that there are people who understand and can act on that person's preferences.

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765



## Focusing on prevention

Ensuring that someone's independence and well-being are optimised in all key areas of their life before they run into serious difficulties maximises their chances of staying in good health and avoiding accidents or other issues, thus giving them the best possible quality of life and minimising the need for care, sheltered housing or other supported accommodation services

The VIP Star is intended to be used collaboratively with service users wherever possible. When used in this way, it is neither a service user self-completion tool nor a worker-only completion tool. This Organisation Guide includes pointers on how to use the VIP Star collaboratively, but the guidance is intended to support rather than replace the skills of those working with service users. The VIP Star is a flexible tool that relies on the skills and judgement of the professionals using it and on a degree of understanding and trust between client and professional. The tool should never be used in a way that undermines the effectiveness of the work between the professional and the service user.

## How the VIP Star™ was developed

The VIP Star was developed in collaboration with the Pocklington Trust and Blind Veterans UK. As with other versions of the Outcomes Star, the methodology was based on Action Research<sup>4</sup> and the Existential Phenomenological (PE) research method<sup>5</sup>. 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.

### Pilot process

The Pocklington Trust was the sole collaborator with Triangle in the early stages, to develop a pilot version of the VIP Star. Blind Veterans UK joined the collaboration at the pilot stage so some aspects of the process were repeated to enable their involvement. However, broadly, the VIP Star development process consisted of three main stages common to the development of all versions of the Outcomes Star:

### 1) Data gathering

An initial one-day workshop was held at one of the Pocklington Trust services in September 2011 with a group comprising managers, front-line workers and service users. The workshop explored 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 the end point? **This is described in a series of steps showing a clearly discernible, qualitative difference between each step of the journey**

---

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)

<sup>4</sup> 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)

<sup>5</sup> 'McCall, R. (1983), "Phenomenological Psychology", Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin'



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

- Using an Outcome Triangle tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific changes they are trying to bring about and the activities the service carries out to achieve these changes
- Bringing to mind an individual 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 VIP Star™

Triangle then compiled all the material gathered at the workshop and reviewed it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. Existing material on visual impairment was borne in mind and the pilot VIP Star drew heavily on the Older Person's Star and the Well-being Star, which had already been tested within one of the Pocklington Trust services. However, the intention was also to allow the raw data to speak for itself, and to explore any ways in which the outcome areas or underlying Journey of Change were uniquely different from those existing versions. On the basis of this material, a draft version of the VIP Star was developed.

## 3) Consultation and piloting

Through an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and re-sharing, we honed the outcome areas, the Journey of Change and the descriptions of the steps towards change in each outcome area until they truly resonated with the service users, support workers and managers participating in the development process. This process had three main steps:

- The first draft of the Star was presented to the lead collaborators within Pocklington and feedback was gathered. In the light of this feedback, improvements were made to the pilot VIP Star and further work was undertaken to develop the VIP Star Online with added accessibility features to facilitate the pilot.
- Workers and service users tested the Star within the Pocklington Trust and Blind Veterans UK during a pilot period from April 2012 to June 2013. The pilot was extended due to changes within the Pocklington Trust and the involvement of Blind Veterans UK part way through the process.
- Final workshops in July 2013 with each collaborator. At these workshops, the results of the pilot were reviewed and the experience of participants was shared.
- Further revisions were subsequently made to the VIP Star. The final stage involved editing and design to ensure the tool was clear, accessible and user-friendly in advance of the first edition being published.

## Pilot findings

The VIP Star was completed twice with just under 100 people during the pilot period. The majority of them by the welfare officers at Blind Veterans UK, who were part of the pilot. Only six tenants at the Pocklington Trust completed two readings on the VIP Star, though a much larger number completed one Star.

Overall pilot feedback from both the Pocklington Trust and Blind Veterans UK was very positive. Some tweaks were made to the scales in response to the pilot feedback, including shortening the names of the scales.

## Format and accessibility

Blind Veterans UK trialled four different tablet computers alongside the VIP Star pilot, so most of their members completed the Star using a tablet. They found that the visual aspect of the Star on tablets enabled members to be more included in the process of assessment and review.

At the Pocklington Trust, more people had some residual sight and could use the PDFs. In both organisations, the Star was sometimes completed collaboratively with the worker reading the scales to their client. Both organisations concluded that it was not necessary to make the resources available in Braille.

The visual aspect of the Star on a tablet enabled members to be more included and they responded well to that.

**Welfare officer,  
Blind Veterans UK**

## Fit for different services

Blind Veterans UK originally intended to pilot the VIP Star within all their services. It worked well for the welfare officers, who support members over a period of time to improve their lives overall, and are mainly social workers. However, it was found not to be a good fit for:

- Rehabilitation and training services, where the focus is on one specific area over a short period of time, for example learning computer skills or how to handle money
- Care services, where the emphasis is on optimising and maintaining quality of life and on providing for people's practical needs. It is possible that this will be revisited once the VIP Star is more established within other areas of service.

The Pocklington Trust found that while many of their tenants appreciated and understood the VIP Star, those with dementia were not able to engage meaningfully with it.

## Which services is it suitable for?

The VIP Star is suitable for use in services where:

- There is an ongoing keywork relationship between the worker and the person with a visual impairment
- The aim of the service is to maximise their independence and well-being
- The service is holistic, so the person with the visual impairment and the worker are taking an overview of the person's life, rather than focusing in-depth on one aspect.

The Star is not likely to be suitable for drop-in services or those providing one-off or short-term advice. In addition, because completing the VIP Star is a collaborative process with the goal of maximising independence and well-being rather than just meeting immediate care needs, it is likely to work best in services that share these values. Where these values are not shared, the VIP

Star may be at odds with the service culture. In this case, some culture change work may be needed in order for the Star to sit comfortably within the service.

## How the VIP Star™ fits with other tools and models

### Personal care needs

The Star is a keywork tool and is designed to support discussions between staff and service users about their current and future well-being and independence and to take an overview of the person's life. It will not give information on specific care needs – for example, whether someone needs help from a service to go shopping or manage their paperwork. Where care is needed, the specifics of this will need to be recorded separately.

### Risk assessment

In cases of high risk, specific risk assessment and management plans should be implemented first. The Star could then be used to measure the outcome of those strategies.

### Quality of life

The Star does not measure absolute quality of life – a measurement that can often be misleading – firstly because neither the services nor the individual have complete control over quality of life, and secondly because two individuals may perceive a similar lifestyle very differently. Instead, the Star measures whether independence and well-being have been maximised. This is something that the individual and service providers can work together to achieve, and will be the goal of services.

Exactly what this means in terms of level of independence and well-being will vary between people, and may also vary for the same person at different times. However, any person can reach the top of the VIP Star scale, regardless of health and circumstances, if effective services are in place and the person themselves is doing all they can to maximise their independence and well-being.

The actual quality of life and level of independence of two people choosing a 5 might be very different. One might be living independently in their own home, active in their local community and in work or training. Another might be living in sheltered accommodation, with limited mobility and requiring a high level of personal care. However, if both these people are doing all they can and receiving all the services they need to maximise their independence and well-being then both would be at the top of the scale.

### VIP Star™ resources

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

### VIP Star™ Chart and Action Plan

The Star Chart and Action Plan 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. It is completed with service users when using the VIP Star on paper. Organisations may choose to enlarge the Star Chart and Action Plan to A3 size, but it is currently designed to print on A4.

## VIP Star™ User Guide

The VIP Star User Guide contains concise, user-friendly scales in the form of a quiz and detailed descriptions for each of the scale points. There is also a brief introduction to the VIP Star for service users. The User Guide is essential for all workers using the VIP Star and is designed so that it can also be given to service users, when appropriate.

Organisations can choose to print out and collate the brief, quiz-style scales separate from the detailed scales for use with their clients.

## Training

It is essential that workers receive training before using the VIP Star, and training is a requirement of the Star Licence. Triangle provides in-house training for staff teams, runs a Licensed Trainer scheme and works in collaboration with the Pocklington Trust to enable smaller service providers to access training and use the VIP Star. For further details, see the Outcomes Star website – [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk), email [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk) or call us on 020 7272 8765.

## This Organisation Guide

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

## Outcomes Star™ website

The Outcomes Star website – [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk) – contains preview versions of all the Stars that can be freely accessed, along with a wealth of 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.

Want to use this tool?

## The VIP Star™ online [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

The VIP Star, along with all other versions of the Star, can be used via an intuitive web application called the Star Online, as well as on paper. This application has a feature that allows workers to complete the Star Chart with service users on-screen, incorporating the scales from the VIP Star User Guide and guidance for workers and service users. It has been modified for accessibility for blind and partially sighted users. For those with some

sight, the Star can be significantly magnified on screen using zoom tools. An adapted 'harlequin Star' (pictured below) is used on the Star Online, ensuring users can distinguish between scales and identify each scale even at high levels of magnification. In addition, there is the option to switch to text-only so that blind users familiar with Jaws and other reader software can navigate the full tool independently, facilitating familiarisation, independence and discussion.

The Star Online 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. This tool is available to organisations using the VIP Star as an optional part of their Star Licence, which is based on the number of workers using the Star.

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 on the Star Online at a later date. To try the free demo or to sign up for a Star Licence and use the Star Online, go to [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk).



The Harlequin Star is used on the Star Online making it easy for users to navigate the image at high levels of magnification

Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765

# Part 1: Implementing the VIP Star™ in your Service or Organisation

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

- 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 and well-being
- Provide greater clarity about the aims of the service 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, analyse data and ensure all levels of management have the information they need
- Demonstrate effectiveness and highlight the areas where improvement is needed and where workers and managers need to improve engagement
- Provide a focus for discussion with commissioners about the role and contribution of the service in the wider local strategic context.

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 VIP 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 the organisation. You might find it helpful to set up a steering group of managers, different types of professionals, front-line workers and, in some cases, service users.

There are eight steps to introducing the Star to your organisation:

- Review your reasons for introducing the Star
- Assess the suitability of the Star for your service
- Run a pilot
- Integrate the Star into your ways of working, paperwork and IT
- Train all staff to use the Star

My advice is to see 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.

**St Mungo's**

Want to use this tool?  
visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765



- Ensure quality and consistency in the use of the Star
- Analyse and interpret the data
- Share and act on the learning.

Triangle provides implementation support packages that include help with individual aspects of the process, background support, mentoring and staff training, along with Star Online set-up assistance and licensing.

To find out more, visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk). You can also sign up for the Outcomes Star newsletter via the website or follow [@outcomesstar](https://twitter.com/outcomesstar) on Twitter. To buy a Star Licence and to access all materials and the web application once licensed, go to [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk)

## 1 Review your reasons for introducing the Star™

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

### Internal reasons:

- You want to take an outcomes approach to your 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 service delivery
- You want to change the culture of service delivery from one in which things are done for or to service users to one that works with service users to enable them to have more choice and to do more for themselves.

### External reasons:

- To demonstrate the value of the service to funders or commissioners
- Because a funder or commissioner requires that you 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 primarily motivated by internal reasons. Even if you are introducing the Star for external reasons, it is recommended that you adopt it in the spirit of learning and service improvement and capitalise on the internal benefits, too.

## 2 Assess the suitability of the VIP Star™ for your service

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

### i) Do you take a keywork approach and work with people over a period of time?

The Star is 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. If you only see a service user once or twice over a short period of time – such as less than six weeks – or have a drop-in service with little or no one-to-one contact, the VIP Star is probably not suitable for your service.



## ii) Do you work holistically with service users?

If your service focuses on one or two aspects of a person's life, the VIP Star will not be suitable as it is holistic, covering all key areas of life. However, it will work well if you are aiming to help service users with all or most of the areas described in the VIP Star.

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

## iii) Are you aiming to help people with a visual impairment maximise their independence and well-being?

The Star is designed to help you and the people with a visual impairment you work with to assess changes towards maximising their independence and well-being. For some people this may be about helping to change their circumstances, such as finding more suitable accommodation or helping with appropriate benefits. For others, it may be about supporting them to change their attitudes and behaviour, for example recognising that there are things they can do to preserve their good health or slow its deterioration. For many, it will be a combination of the two.

If your service works on these changes, the VIP Star will be suitable.

If you are not sure which version or versions of the Star to use, contact Triangle – email [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk) or call us on 020 7272 8765. You can also take a look at the Outcomes Star website – [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk) – to see the other versions of the Star. If none of the available versions fit your service adequately, please contact Triangle to find out about new versions in development or to explore the possibility of working with us to create a new Star. 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 statements within the Star materials or on the Outcomes Star website.

## 3 Run a pilot

Depending on the size of your organisation, it may be advisable to pilot the VIP Star in one or more services before rolling it out. 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

Workers were unsure at first but my approach was to involve the workers likely to be most open and encourage them to have a go with it. Almost immediately, positive feedback from those workers and their clients encouraged others to want to use it too.

**Croftlands Trust**

Want to use this tool?

Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)

or 020 7272 8765

- If it goes well, it creates a demonstration project, as well as 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 whole organisation.

Research on the implementation of the Star found that there was resistance from workers in more than 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 that the Star makes their job easier and better – and that it is not another administrative loop. This can be done through formal training or discussions in team meetings, or both.
- **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, they are more likely to enthuse others. In addition, feedback from the service users they work with can provide invaluable concrete evidence of the benefits and popularity of the Star and offset 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.

The main concern initially was that the Star would impact on workload but actually it fits nicely with the process of assessment.

Welfare officer,  
Blind Veterans UK

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

The Star works best as an integral part of the keywork process and recording systems, with Star readings taking place at the point when assessment and action planning would normally occur in your service, and Star Charts stored alongside other client data. 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.

### 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

Want to use this tool?

Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)

or 020 7272 8765

are expected to change. For most types of service, the following is advised:

- A first reading is completed when a relationship has been developed with the service user and at the point when a support plan needs to be developed, ideally within the first four weeks
- Use the Star every three to six months, linking it to action plans or reviews of support
- Do a final reading upon the service user's exit, if they move on to other services or no longer require the support of your service.

It may not be appropriate to complete the Star the first time workers meet new service users coming into the service. There is a balance to strike between getting to know a service user better before completing a Star 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.

For services for people with a visual impairment, it will probably be appropriate to complete the Star every 3-6 months. However, the frequency can be decided by services and depends on:

- **How quickly people change.** With service users for whom a considerable amount may happen in as little as six months, readings could be more frequent. In services where change is slow or maintenance is the norm, the gap between Star readings can be longer, but at least once a year is advised
- **The intensity of service delivery.** With intense and residential services, it may be appropriate to complete the Star more often. For services seeing people less frequently, a longer gap would be appropriate
- **How long service users stay with your service.** For short-term services of just a few weeks, it is recommended that you complete Stars at the start and end of the service. Longer-term services, such as those engaging with individuals for over a year, may allow six months or more between readings.

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

## Online or paper-based completion

Stars can be completed with service users on paper, using the Star Chart and Action Plan, or online, using the Star Online web application – [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk).

Where the technology is available to workers, it is highly recommended that services use the VIP Star Online web application. Many service users will find the Star more accessible and engaging online than on paper. Another advantage of online completion is that the data is simultaneously captured during the keywork session, eliminating the need for later data entry. This enables the database to provide immediate, up-to-date, service-wide and organisation-wide reports for analysis. Use paper instead where laptops, iPads and other mobile devices are not available for use in keywork or where service users prefer pen and paper.

To find out about online completion and try out the free demo, visit [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk).

## Can the Star™ replace other paperwork?

The Star is not intended to increase the amount of paperwork that service users and workers need to complete.

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765

Services may find that completing the Star Chart and Action Plan can fully or partially replace their existing assessment forms and action or support plans. This may mean replacing existing forms or amending paperwork to cover the same areas as the VIP Star. It is important to ensure that key information on accommodation, work or financial issues is gathered additionally. A form could be attached to the front of the Star Chart and Action Plan, for example. 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.

The Star will not, however, replace a risk assessment and many organisations may find they still need to complete a risk assessment separately.

Some organisations use the Star alongside their existing paperwork but others prefer to incorporate the Star and scales into their own paperwork. This is allowed within the terms of the Star Licence.

## How will the information be recorded and summarised?

The Star Online web application 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 compare average outcomes within your organisation, and nationally. The web application is available with your Star Licence. It can be used as a standalone system or, from early 2014, it will be possible to integrate the Star Online with another client management system.

If you use 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 keep a copy.

## 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 training from Triangle or a licensed trainer. A minimum one-day Introduction to the Outcomes Star training session is a condition of having a Star Licence and using the Star, but a range of more in-depth and tailored training is also available.

It is important to make clear how the Star fits with other training that staff have received, and other initiatives within your organisation. For example, if your organisation uses Motivational Interviewing, it will help workers if you can be explicit how the Star can be used effectively with this approach.

Effective use of the Star requires that those using it are skilled in working with service users. Introducing the Star may be an opportunity to review the training needs of your staff in this area and address any outstanding concerns.

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

The data gained from using the Star will only provide an accurate picture of service users' progress 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.

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765

## Staff supervision

When discussing a worker's caseload, draw on the service users' completed Stars – using all of them or just a sample, depending on the caseload. This will help managers to ensure that the Star is being used as planned and is being completed accurately and 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. It is also helpful to audit whether an individual's Star reading and action plan are meaningful and congruent. For example, if the Star shows that the person is close to maximising their independence and well-being in relation to their health but the action is to register with a GP or to start attending routine appointments, this would indicate a misunderstanding, or lack of confidence on behalf of the worker to have potentially difficult conversations with the service user.

## 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 scale points recorded at that time. If so, this should be discussed with the service user or recorded as a worker-only reading. Workers will need a manager's authorisation to amend records on the Star Online.

## Team meetings

When discussing service users in team meetings, look at each person's Star 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. This can be particularly important when you are working in a multidisciplinary team where different people bring different perspectives and expertise to bear.

The Star and notes are very helpful for me managing staff. For example, to see why they are saying tenants are at 5 on some scales.

**Manager,  
Pocklington Trust**

The VIP Star is my tool as a manager – to see at a glance who is in our services and where they are on the Star.

**Manager,  
Pocklington Trust**

**Want to use this tool?  
Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)**

**Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765**