

## How to switch to the new, improved Home Star™

### Guidance for organisations already using the Homelessness Star (the Outcomes Star for housing and other needs)

In April 2022, Triangle will launch the Home Star, a new and improved version of the Outcomes Star for housing and other needs (known as the Homelessness Star). Organisations already using the old Homelessness Star will be supported to switch to the new Home Star.

This document explains why, how and when.

Please note – Triangle will be ending support for the old Homelessness Star once services have had a chance to switch. This will be after a year minimum (April 2023) but we will consult and review.

#### 1 Why did we create the Home Star™?

Triangle is committed to ensuring that the Outcomes Stars stay relevant and continue to support best practice and enabling ways of working. We keep them under review, seeking feedback and developing new editions as needed. We published the first edition of the Homelessness Star (the ‘Outcomes Star’) in 2006 and the most recent edition (3.1) in 2017. Since 2006, we have developed over 40 more Stars, leading to new learning, including how to make the Stars and guidance more trauma-informed, strengths based and person-centred.

We did an extensive review of the Homelessness Star. Consultation and feedback highlighted changes to client groups and services, meaning this Star needed to be a better fit for women and those with complex needs, and to recognise increasingly difficult economic, housing and other external factors. It also showed how we needed to update the language, to be even more trauma-informed and more client-centred.

The Outcome Stars are a validated and peer-reviewed method of creating sustainable behavioural change and measuring outcomes, used by Governments, local authorities, councils, charities and other organisations in the UK, Australia and many other countries internationally.

#### 2 What has changed in the new Home Star?

There are three main improvements:

- a. Updated language throughout the Home Star scales
- b. Substantial changes to some scales
- c. Additional resources to support engagement and accessibility

##### a) Improved language throughout all the Home Star scales:

- The labels for the Star areas and wording in the scales use more **trauma informed** and **client centred language**. It is more explicit that things may be ‘stuck’ in the first stage because **people don't have the service they need**, or the service isn't delivered in a way that works for them. There is also more explicit recognition of **external factors that may be beyond the person's control**

- To clarify how this Star works for people with complex needs, there is more emphasis on either 8 or 10 being the endpoint – a **dual endpoint for two scales** - depending on whether self-reliance is a helpful and realistic goal for someone. At 8, people are safe and as well and independent as they can be, with **ongoing support**. This is the same as 8 on the Homelessness Star but with greater emphasis and clarity in the Home Star.

These wording changes through the scales do not significantly affect the content of what is measured using the Home Star compared to the Homelessness Star.

### b) Substantial changes to some scales

There are also changes in the content of some outcome areas or the points on the Journey of Change at which milestones are reached. Some of these were to make the Home Star more appropriate for **use with women** as well as men, including more references to children and families. Others are in response to **feedback and learning**, including from the data. These changes are set out below. They significantly change some of the content of what is measured using the new Home Star:

Homelessness Star (edition 3.1)	Home Star (scale order also changed)	Detail of changes
1. Motivation and taking responsibility	Trust and hope	A different scale, to be more trauma-informed and client centred
2. Self-care and living skills	Caring for myself and my space	Content similar
3. Managing money	My money	Minor differences, including meeting responsibilities to dependents at 10
4. Social networks and relationships	Friends and relationships	Significant differences, with more references to family
5. Drug and alcohol misuse	Alcohol and drugs	Content similar
6. Physical health	My health	Content similar
7. Emotional and mental health	How I feel	Minor differences, including ongoing mental health treatment at 10
8. Meaningful use of time	How I spend my day	Significant differences, less about work and more about meaningful activities
9. Managing tenancy and accommodation	Where I'm living	Significant differences, including people reaching 7 without accommodation
10. Offending	Safety and crime	A different scale, with the addition of being a victim of crime

The Development Process document describes the differences in more detail.

### c) Additional resources to support engagement and accessibility

The Home Star core materials include the Star chart and action plan, User Guide with detailed scales and Guidance for Workers, as with the current Homelessness Star. In addition, we have added:

- Short, illustrated scales

- Illustrated flashcards - one explaining each of the 10 areas of the Star and one for each of the 5 stages of the Journey of Change
- A leaflet explaining the Home Star for service users

As with all resources, these can be used flexibly where they are helpful for people to engage and understand the Star so it can support them to make sense of where they are and what they need. They may be particularly useful where people have limited English or struggle with the written word.

### 3 What do these changes mean for me?

The extent of the changes mean the Home Star is a significant improvement. It has been very well received by workers, managers and service users. This supports acceptability, implementation and good practice.

However, it needs to be treated as a new version, not a new edition. This has implications for:

- **Your internal processes**, guidance and policies about the Star, possibly including referral forms or policies or handbooks. These will probably need updating and we recommend you do an internal audit of all materials which mention the Star areas, for example
- **Training or briefing workers**: training in the Home Star will be available from April 2022. If your workers are all already trained in the Homelessness Star, there is no obligation to have training in the Home Star. However, this is an ideal moment for refresher training
- **Data and reporting**: the outcomes data gathered using the Home Star is not directly comparable to that gathered using the Homelessness Star as several scales measure substantially different things (as summarised in the above table), and others also have smaller changes that affect comparability.

For these reasons, we cannot simply replace the current edition of the Homelessness Star with the Home Star and will initially publish it as a separate version of the Outcomes Star, alongside the existing Homelessness Star. We will then invest in supporting existing users of this Star to switch, to get the benefits of the improvements in the Home Star, before withdrawing the Homelessness Star. Below we set out the options for organisations switching to the Home Star. Triangle will also be running free informational webinars from April 2022 (see our website for more information) and will be on hand to talk through and support you through the process.

### 4 What are the options for switching to the Home Star from the Homelessness Star?

The two main options for rolling out the Home Star are:

#### 1. Set a date to start using the Home Star for *all* service users – current and new. We recommend this option

**The advantages of this approach are:**

- The Home Star is significantly better from a keywork perspective – more accessible with additional resources and addressing the language that some people don't like in the existing version - so using it as soon as possible for all clients is beneficial
- It is simpler for workers to only be using one version of the Star
- It makes it simpler to update your internal policies and procedures related to the Star

- The new Home Star is more likely to demonstrate change for service users, particularly in those outcome areas that worked less well in the Homelessness Star e.g. 'Crime and safety' instead of 'Offending'
- It will be quicker to build a data set for the Home Star than option 2

**Potential challenges or considerations are:**

- Current service users need to get used to a different version of the Star (this may not be a problem if they prefer it)
- Current service users will have earlier readings on the Homelessness Star and then be reviewed using the Home Star. For that reading, it may be harder to understand change at an individual level, until the Star is reviewed again using the Home Star
- You will not be able to report at a detailed, outcome-area level for current clients for a period of the time between starting to use the Home Star and having reviews done with the Home Star. How long this period is will depend on the frequency of readings and size of your service. You will be able to create some [high-level reports](#) across both versions if needed, as explained in section 7 below.

**2. Initially use the Home Star only for *new* service users and continue using the Homelessness Star with current service users who have Homelessness Star readings.**

**The advantages of this approach are:**

- You can continue to report detailed outcomes for current clients and to produce Homelessness Star outcomes reports without a gap while making the switch to the Home Star
- Understanding change easier at an individual level as each service user will only use one version of the Star
- This option may be preferable for services that are relatively short term or have a high turnover of clients, so where all service users will be new to the service within 6-12 months, as it won't take so long for all clients to be using the Home Star. If this applies to you, we recommend introducing the Home Star for new services users as soon as possible.

**Potential challenges or considerations are:**

- Workers will need to use more than one version of the Star
- Updating internal policies and procedures may be more complicated
- Delaying moving to the Home Star is less desirable from a keywork perspective
- Delaying moving to the Home Star may be less desirable from reporting perspective because the Home Star may be more likely to demonstrate change e.g. for victims of crime
- It will take longer to build a data set with the Home Star

You may decide that another option is to do nothing, and not switch. This is OK in the short term, but because the Home Star is a substantial improvement, we plan to retire the Homelessness Star at some point. This will not be before April 2023, but we will keep you up to date with plans and will be in touch before then to encourage you to switch and offer support.

## 5 What happens on the Star Online?

From April 2022, the Home Star will be available on the Star Online as a new Star. If you use the [Star Online](#), your Account Lead will need to accept the Home Star to your account, then link it to the relevant services. If you are going for Option 1 (all clients) in terms of the roll-out, the Account Lead can also deactivate the Homelessness Star to prevent new data from being added and use the 'Start multiple engagements' function to start new engagements for the Home Star. The Helpdesk can support you through these steps.

Because the Home Star is a new version, Star Online cannot create reports that combine data from the Home Star and the old Homelessness Star. This means that for a period of time, you will have historical data showing change using the Homelessness Star and initial readings only on the Home Star. Depending on the length of time people spend in your service and the turnover of clients, it will take a while for your service to build a good body of data and be able to report detailed change using the Home Star. As mentioned above, you will be able to draw some high-level conclusions and learning across the Homelessness Star and Home Star datasets, so that all change is captured or to look at trends over time (see section 7 below).

This process will be similar to starting to use any new version of the Star or other outcome measurement tool. You may need to warn those to whom you report your outcomes data that this will be the case. Triangle is also producing guidance for commissioners and other funders and will be communicating these temporary implications for data reporting.

## 6 What happens if we use the Star in another software system?

If you use the Star in other software, the Home Star will need to be added as a new Star version. Contact your software provider or internal IT or systems team in the first instance or contact Triangle for support. Due to the substantial differences between these versions of the Star, it is not meaningful or accurate to combine the data to report on specific outcome areas (even if technically possible), though some high-level reports are possible and meaningful (see 7 below).

## 7 Can I do any reporting across Homelessness Star and Home Star?

It is possible to draw some high-level conclusions and learning across the Homelessness Star and Home Star datasets, so that all change is captured or to look at trends over time. This involves manually creating high-level reports across the versions without the detail of specific outcome areas, for example, the percentage of service users making progress in 2+ outcome areas. Please see our ['Reporting across different Stars'](#) briefing for guidance on creating these reports or contact Triangle for support.

## 8 Next steps and further information

From the beginning of April 2022, as a licenced Star user you can start any time to:

- Access the new Home Star materials of the Star Online and familiarise yourself with the new Star and changes
- Consider refresher training for staff – training in the Home Star is available from April 2022
- Discuss internally the timing and options for switching
- Draw together your internal materials which mention the Star and plan when and how to update them

In addition, Triangle will be proactively contacting and supporting organisations who need to switch to the Home Star, as well as providing a series of free informational webinars.

For more details, please see our website [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk) contact us on +44(0)207 272 8765 or [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk) or speak to your Triangle Implementation Lead, Regional Coordinator or other contact person.