# Integration Star™

**The Outcomes Star for refugees**

**The Outcomes Star™**
This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

- RETAS (Refugee Education Training Advice Service) Leeds, Leeds Refugee Forum, Path Yorkshire, Goodwin Development Trust, Humber Community Advice Services (H-CAS), Refugee Action Kingston, Iranian Association, Diversity Living Services, Bahar Women's Association, Action for Community Development, West Yorkshire Somali Association, DAMASQ, Stepping Stone 4 and Leeds Swahili Community.

# Contents

# Introduction

## The Outcomes Stars suite of tools

The Outcomes Stars are a suite of person-centred tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people. They are both keywork and outcomes tools, supporting effective interventions and giving management data on progress towards the end outcome. Because of this dual role, they bring together measurement and service delivery and can provide a shared language and framework across operations and data management for departments and between commissioners and service providers.

All versions of the Outcomes Star have five- or ten-point scales arranged in a star shape. Each point on each scale has detailed descriptors setting out attitudes, behaviour and sometimes skills or circumstances typical of that point on the scale. Underpinning these scales is a model of change (the Journey of Change) describing the steps towards the end goal that both the service and service user are trying to achieve.

The Outcomes Star suite of tools are different to other approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement[1]. They are designed to empower service users within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that supports a positive conversation and is integrated with support work, rather than being a separate activity. The Star is closely aligned to person-centred, strengths-based, co-production and trauma-informed approaches and can support people and organisations to put those values into practice:

- Person-centred: the Star encourages and enables workers to listen to the perspective and priorities of service users and to work with them collaboratively. It helps engage service users to develop realistic action plans based on where they are on the Journey of Change

- Strengths-based: the Star is holistic and enables people to focus on aspects of life that are going well rather than have an assessment focused entirely on areas of difficulty. The

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[1] The Outcomes Stars share the core principles of Participatory Action Research (O'Brien, 2001; Carr & Kemmis, 1986) – empowerment, collaboration and integration – extending these beyond research into assessment and outcome measurement. Participatory Action Research seeks to empower the subjects of research, collaborate with them and integrate research into practical action to improve people's lives. The Outcomes Stars seek to empower service users within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated with support work rather being than a separate activity.

scales focus on what service users can change, rather than the severity of their problems or circumstances

- Co-production: the collaborative approach to completion means that the service user and worker produce the assessment and measurement together and build a shared perspective as a basis for action. This is in contrast to expert assessment or self-report approaches in which the two perspectives remain separate

- Trauma informed: the collaborative nature of the Star helps to give the service user control, which has been shown to be important in building a sense of safety for people who have experienced trauma. The focus of the tool is primarily on how things are now, rather than past experiences that might trigger someone's trauma and put them outside their safe "window of tolerance". In addition, the guidance for use emphasises the importance of building of a trusting relationship and a shared perspective as an essential foundation to moving forward.

For a fuller description of the values and approach underpinning the Outcomes Stars suite of tools, see MacKeith (2011).

Background and further information about the Outcomes Stars suite of tools can be found at **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

## The Integration Star™

The Integration Star is for use with refugees needing support to integrate into their new country and to build a life there.

The Integration Star includes the following resources:

- The Integration Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan for use with refugees
- The Integration Star User Guide, with both brief visual scales and detailed scale descriptions, which can be shared with service users as needed
- Short, illustrated Scales and Flashcards to help engage refugees in discussion
- Guidance for Workers, for support workers in refugee organisations
- An information leaflet for service users and translators
- A web application for online completion and analysis at www.staronline.org.uk

There will be some translations of the short scales and Star Chart – check whether the

languages you need are available or talk to us about new translations by emailing info@triangleconsulting.co.uk

This Development Report provides a detailed description of the development process of the Integration Star.

# Development process for the Integration Star™

## Methodology

The methodology for developing all versions of the Outcomes Star is based on Action Research (O'Brien, 2001) and the Existential Phenomenological research method (McCall, 1983). Action Research is a collaborative process of identifying issues, trying out solutions and assessing what works. This phenomenological method places a strong emphasis on understanding the subjective experience of the person or people being researched and the meaning of the experience for them.

The development process comprises four main stages:

Stage 1: Exploring the scope and need for the tool
Stage 2: Creating the pilot version of the new Star in consultation with the working group
Stage 3: The pilot
Stage 4: Finalising the tool

Below we describe how this process was applied to create the Integration Star.

## Stage 1. Exploring the scope and need for the tool

The Refugee Council approached Triangle to develop a new version of the Outcomes Star that would support the refugees they work with on a range of key outcomes:

- Improved ability to make informed choices
- Increased social inclusion (including via English language and employment)
- Improved physical health and mental well being
- Improved economic and financial well-being (accessing welfare benefits and employment)
- Improved accommodation and safety
- Receiving identity documents
- Mental health.

Triangle then carried out a scoping process, involving:

- An exploratory literature review that included consideration of the Home Office's *Indicators of Integration* report
- Mapping the existing service landscape to identify the likely audience and usefulness of the proposed version
- Checking prior interest and enquiries from other services for a similar or the same version.

As with any new version of the Star, this phase also included scoping the capacity for both the Refugee Council and Triangle to undertake the development within the budget and timescale needed. Based on this, Triangle's conclusion was to proceed with a version of the Star specifically for refugees designed to encourage best practice across the sector, ensuring refugees receive the right level of support where and when they need it.

It was acknowledged that Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) and others may want to use this version of the Star with adult asylum seekers, and that the need for verbal adjustments for this client group should be covered in training. The Star could also be tested for use with other migrants in need of protection.

Triangle developed and published a separate Star for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in 2019 – the Planning Star.

## Stage 2: Creating the pilot version of the new Star in consultation with the expert working group

An expert working group was established comprising managers and workers from the Refugee Council to collaborate in the development of the new Star.

This expert group played a central role throughout the development process, providing in-depth knowledge of the issues faced by service users, the intended outcomes of service delivery and the process of change towards those outcomes. The working group's input was organised around three workshops. The first two contributed to the creation of the pilot version of the tool, and the third and final workshop reviewed the results of the pilot and contributed to refining the tool to create a final version (see Stage 4).

In addition to input from workers and managers as part of the working group, the process included two focus groups with service users, accompanied by workers who knew them so that they could support service users to contribute meaningfully.

**Workshop 1** (April 2019): A one-day workshop was held to identify intended outcomes and processes of change in work supporting refugees. This workshop was attended by a working group made up of 27 professionals with expertise working with refugees, including psychotherapists, welfare advisors and managers working in refugee employment services, integration and resettlement teams. Around half of these professionals were from the Refugee Council and the others from a range of charities, therapeutic services and other Refuge Community Organisations and support services). Some professionals had lived experiences of coming to the UK and settling as refugees. The workshop included a series of focus groups to provide insight about their experiences and the positive outcomes they aim to enable refugees to achieve.

The key questions explored in Workshop 1 were:

- 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 outcome of the change process? *This becomes the end point on the Journey of Change that underpins all the scales*

- What model of change describes the steps that service users take on the journey towards that end point? *This is described in a series of steps – the Journey of Change – showing a clearly discernible, qualitative difference between each step of the journey.*

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

- Using the "outcome triangle" tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific outcomes they are trying to achieve and the activities they carry out to achieve these changes

- Bringing to mind an individual who has undergone a substantial change and identifying the key steps in their process of change

- Hearing feedback about suggested outcome areas and discussing how they would work in different situations and with different service users.

Triangle compiled all the material gathered from the working group at Workshop 1 and reviewed it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. On the basis of this combined with the literature review carried out in Stage 1, a provisional model of change and outcome areas for the Integration Star were developed. These were then used as an outline or "skeleton", from which the first draft of the Integration Star was created.

Once the first draft was completed there was an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and sharing again to hone the outcome areas, Journey of Change and descriptions of the steps towards change in each outcome area until they resonated with the client group and workers participating in the development process. The process included checking that the first draft took into account key themes that emerged from the literature review, and a second workshop with the expert working group.

**Workshop 2** (26th June 2019): A one-day workshop was held to present the first draft of the Integration Star to the expert working group and to hear feedback to inform the pilot version of the Star. On the basis of this feedback and the other activities listed above, the early draft was refined to create a pilot version of the Integration Star with the Journey of Change and outcome areas listed below:

| The pilot Integration Star **Journey of Change** | 5. Self-reliant<br>4. Finding your way<br>3. Taking steps yourself<br>2. Urgent needs met<br>1. Urgent needs |
| --- | --- |
| The pilot Integration Star **Outcome Areas** | 1. Housing<br>2. Money and rent<br>3. Practical English<br>4. Education and work<br>5. Community and connections<br>6. Immigration, laws and systems<br>7. Health and well-being |

## Stage 3: The pilot

Triangle trained 30 workers from Refugee Council services, as well as several other refugee support services from both London and Yorkshire and the Humber regions, to use the Integration Star on 22nd October 2019. These workers then piloted the Star with 69 of their clients over a seven-month pilot period. Of these, 24 were reviewed once, so had two Star readings.

Service users and workers were asked to complete brief feedback forms on their experience of using the Star and to submit the Star data to Triangle for analysis of the psychometric properties of the pilot Star.

During the pilot period, workers identified the need for flashcards to help engage service users in discussion. These were drafted and added to the materials.

**Summary of analysis of client feedback forms**

Triangle received 26 completed questionnaires from clients who had used the Integration Star during the pilot period, of which:

- 84% said that the scales helped them to understand what they needed in the way of support
- 81% said that the scales helped them to describe how life was for them at that moment.

**Summary of analysis of worker feedback forms**

Triangle received 15 feedback forms from workers completing the Star with clients, of which:

- 74% said that using the Star helped them to get a better overall picture of a client's situation
- 67% reported that the Integration Star helped them to get a better picture of clients' needs
- 67% said that the Integration Star reflected the changes clients made.

**Psychometric analyses of the pilot Star data**

Analyses of the Star data from the 69 initial Star readings and 24 second Star readings showed the following:

*Distribution:* Readings were well distributed across the Journey of Change, with no serious deviation from normality across the whole set of clients.

*Item redundancy:* No inter-item correlations were above .70, so there was no indication of item redundancy.

*Internal consistency:* Cronbach's alpha was .65 (below the .70 threshold), and there were some low inter-item correlations suggesting that for the pilot version at least, readings should not be collapsed across outcome areas. We generally do not recommend using whole Star means or totals because of the loss of important information inherent in this.

*Responsiveness:* The sample size was too small to conduct meaningful statistical tests of responsiveness, but the percentage moving forward suggested the Integration Star was responsive to change between first and second readings. All clients moved forward in at

least one outcome area, 79% in two or more and 67% in three or more areas. On average clients moved forward in 3.7 areas.

See the Appendix for more detail on service user and worker feedback and the findings from the Star data.

Further research into the psychometric properties of the final published version of the Integration Star was initiated following publication. For the latest information on this, please contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)**.**

## Stage 4: Finalising the new Star

After the end of the pilot in May 2020, Workshop 3 was held to draw together the learning from the pilot.

**Workshop 3 (21st May 2020):** The third and final meeting of the expert working group gathered in-depth feedback on the process of using the tool from a wide range of people in different contexts. It also focused on the detail of the tool itself – the areas covered, Journey of Change, scale descriptions and range of materials.

The working group was asked some specific questions about the Integration Star and the responses are briefly summarised below.

*What did you think of the pilot Integration Star?*
Of the 18 attendees who had used the Star during the pilot, 16 were very happy with it, one had a mixed overall response and one reported challenges using it during the pilot.

*What worked in the pilot Integration Star?*

Overall, it was felt that the Star was well designed, and the feedback was very positive. Professionals reported that it highlighted where support was needed (sometimes in areas that might otherwise be missed, such as isolation) and where progress had been made. It facilitated in-depth discussions with clients and "encouraged the client to have more autonomy in the conversation". Professionals appreciated the emphasis on moving towards independence.

It was also reported that clients enjoyed completing the Star and found it motivating. Comments included:

"Because it's visual, clients treat it almost as a competition with themselves because they want to see improvement (that's not normal for us)"

"I love the Outcomes Star. It's visual and even if people feel they're not making progress, they can see that they are."

*What didn't work in the pilot Integration Star?*

There were some concerns about how to avoid time-consuming duplication when using the Integration Star in combination with current ways of working, and also about how to use the Star with clients who had limited English. Because of its holistic focus, the Integration Star sometimes brought up issues that services working on single areas (such as employment or housing) did not have the capacity to address – but it was felt that the questions should be asked nonetheless.

There was also specific feedback on each of the outcome areas, including:

- The most substantial feedback was that the group identified the need for an additional scale covering family and children
- There was discussion over whether to place rent in the "Housing" scale or the "Money" scale as it was relevant to both
- Some suggested that education and employment should be separated, and education covered in "Practical English", but following substantial discussion the decision was made to keep these areas combined
- There was some discussion of mental health and how to ensure that this was not missed if it was combined with physical health, as it is often a big issue for clients, but one people can resist discussing

**Changes made to finalise the Star based on learning from the pilot**

On the basis of the worker and service user questionnaires, psychometric analyses, post-pilot service user focus group and Workshop 3 feedback, a number of changes were made to the pilot version of the Integration Star to create the final version. The main changes are summarised below:

- Stage 2 of the Journey of Change (**urgent needs met**) was changed to **support with urgent needs**, reflecting the reality that some urgent needs may take time to sort out
- The "Money and rent" scale name was changed to "Money", but still includes rent
- The top end of the "Practical English" scale is more ambitious and includes more on written English and references to business English
- The "Education and work" scale has more emphasis on short-term and long-term goals

- The "Family and children" scale was added to cover dealing with problems in your family and parenting. Tracing missing families and family reunion, formerly dealt with in other scales, are now included here
- The "Immigration, laws and systems" scale was renamed "Laws, systems and services". It no longer emphasises understanding how the immigration system works
- The "Health and well-being" scale no longer includes coping strategies for emotional well-being and has more emphasis on accessing the right services for physical, mental and emotional health
- More emphasis on mental health and emotional wellbeing within the combined "Health and well-being" scale to support workers to raise this topic with service users.

**Completion**

Once these changes had been made, the draft final version of the Star went through final checks:

1. The Refugee Council was invited to review and comment on the final draft
2. It was reviewed again by Triangle to ensure clarity of descriptions and distinctions between each stage of each scale
3. It was edited and proofed before being typeset

The Integration Star was published in September 2020, after 18 months of development.

# References

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action research*. London: Falmer Press.

MacKeith, J. (2011). The development of the Outcomes Star: A participatory approach to assessment and outcome measurement. *Housing, Care and Support*, *14*(3), 98-106.

McCall, R. (1983) *Phenomenological Psychology*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

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).

# Appendix

## Worker and service user feedback following the Integration Star™ pilot

### Feedback from 26 service users

#### Client feedback: positively phrased questions



My completed Integration Star is a good summary of my life now

- Agree Strongly 19%
- Agree 62%
- 19% Neither agree or disagree

My completed Integration Star highlighted my support needs

- Agree Strongly 12%
- Agree 73%
- 12% Neither agree or disagree
- Strongly disagree 4%

I enjoyed completing the Integration Star

- Agree Strongly 12%
- Agree 58%
- Neither agree or disagree, 27%
- Disagree, 8%
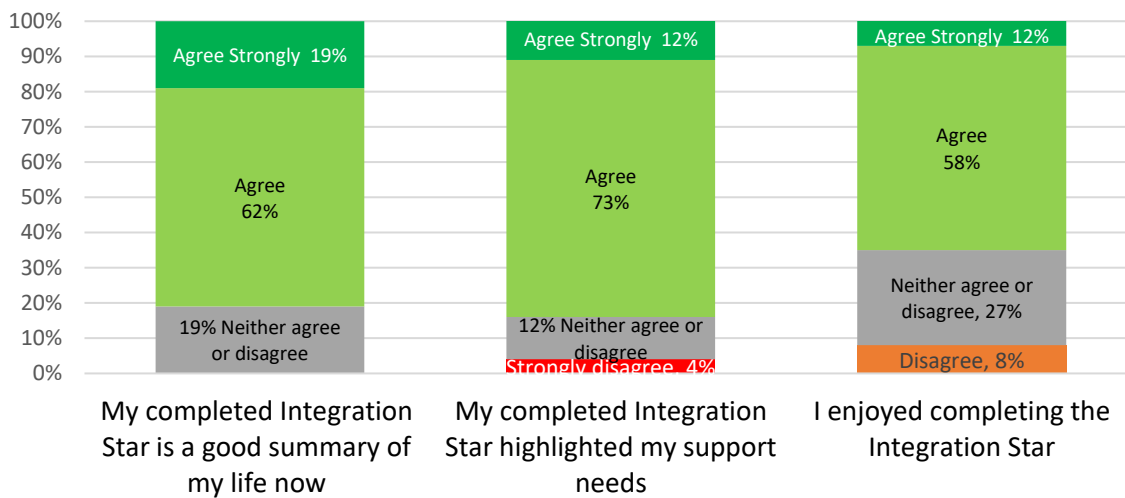
#### Client feedback: negatively phrased questions



It took too long to complete the Integration Star

- Agree Strongly, 13%
- Agree, 13%
- Neither agree or disagree, 25%
- Disagree, 46%
- Strongly

I need support in areas not covered by the Integration Star

- Agree Strongly, 8%
- Agree, 17%
- Neither agree or disagree, 33%
- Disagree, 42%
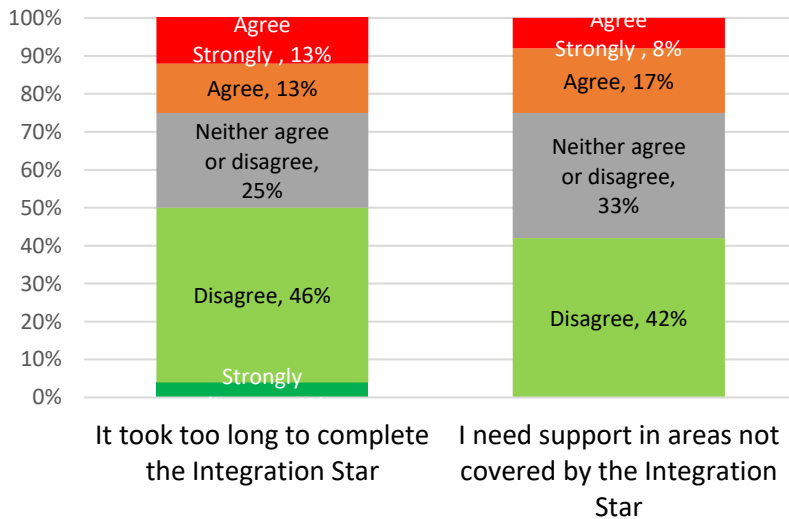
**Open-ended responses**

Eight clients provided written feedback. The positive feedback centred around how the Star helped them to discuss "crucial aspects of one's life and challenges" and to see where support was needed. One client thought there should be more focus on mental health, entertainment, and support to engage in the community.

## Feedback from 15 workers



**Worker feedback: positively phrased questions**

Legend: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree/disagree, Agree, Agree Strongly

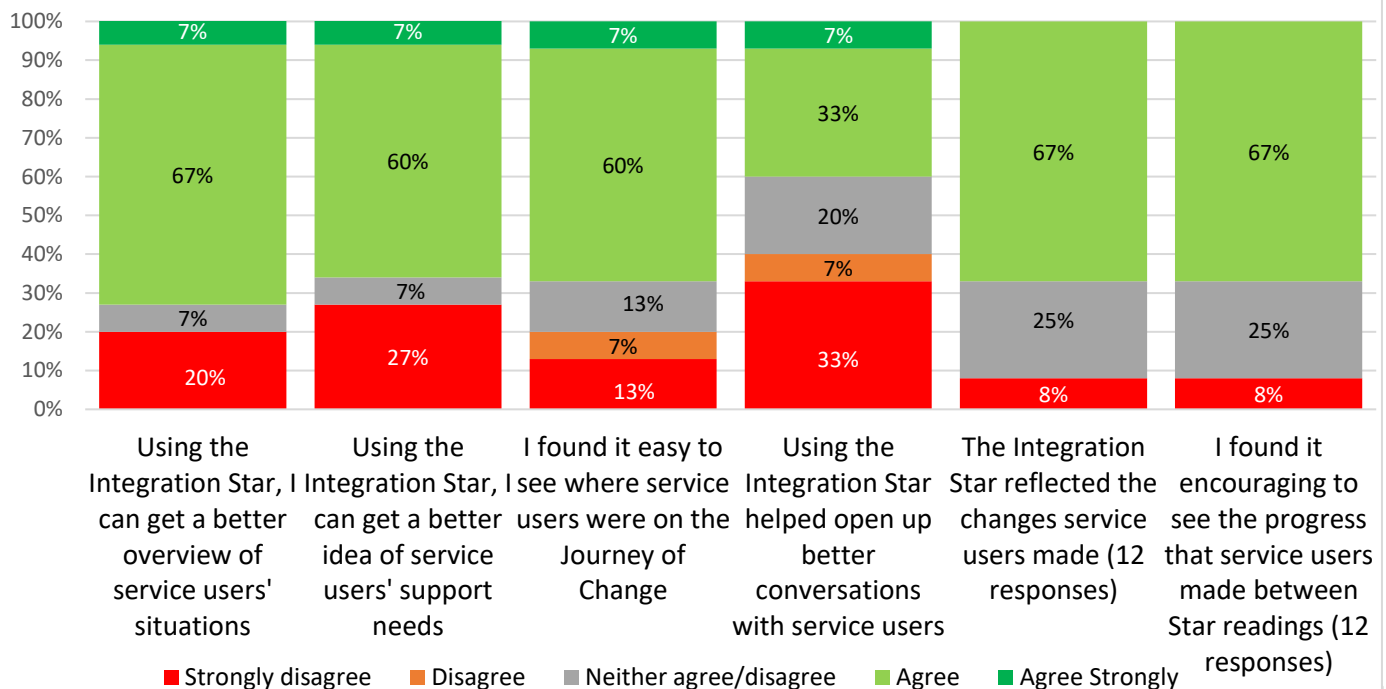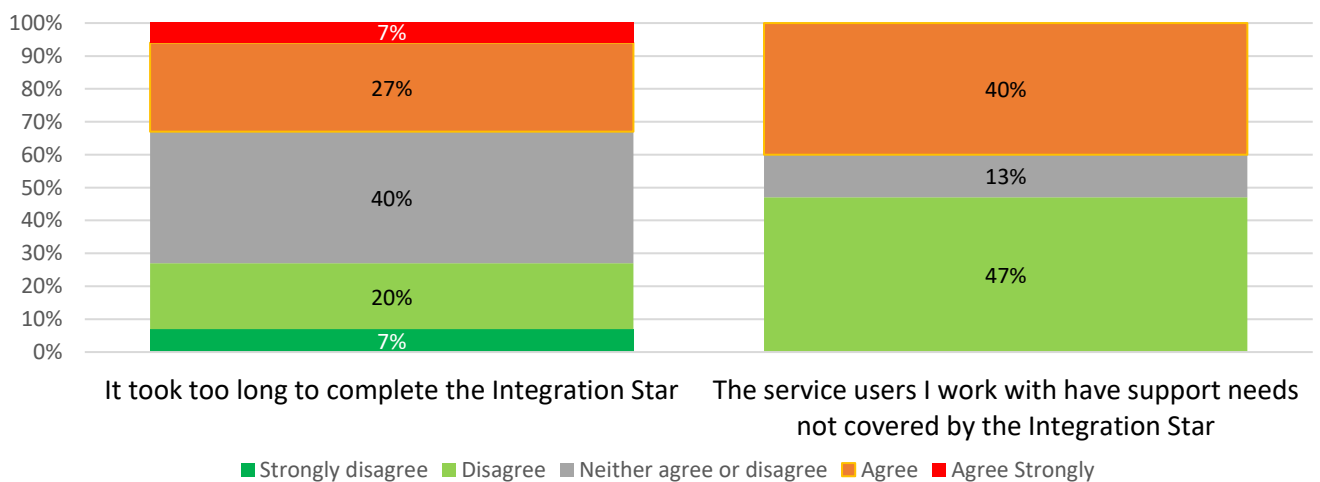| Question | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree/disagree | Agree | Agree Strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Using the Integration Star, I can get a better overview of service users' situations | 20% | | 7% | 67% | 7% |
| Using the Integration Star, I can get a better idea of service users' support needs | 27% | | 7% | 60% | 7% |
| I found it easy to see where service users were on the Journey of Change | 13% | 7% | 13% | 60% | 7% |
| Using the Integration Star helped open up better conversations with service users | 33% | 7% | 20% | 33% | |
| The Integration Star reflected the changes service users made (12 responses) | 8% | | 25% | 67% | |
| I found it encouraging to see the progress that service users made between Star readings (12 responses) | 8% | | 25% | 67% | |



**Worker feedback: negatively phrased**

Legend: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree or disagree, Agree, Agree Strongly

| Question | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Agree Strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It took too long to complete the Integration Star | 7% | 20% | 40% | 27% | 7% |
| The service users I work with have support needs not covered by the Integration Star | | 47% | 13% | 40% | |

**Open-ended responses**

All of the 15 workers reported things they liked about Integration Star and 13 reported areas for improvement.

There was a lot of general positive feedback, for example:

- "Much more visual than our current system, easier to use and understand for both clients and project workers".

- "It encouraged both worker and client to have input on evaluating their current situation and recognising where they might need support. It also helped to manage expectations and for the client to understand which aspects should be priorities."

- "I like the way it opens up the conversation and gives you a reason to discuss different aspects of a client's life, which can help identify issues which may not have otherwise been raised."

- "It also encourages the client to self-reflect on their own capabilities. It is a good document to be able to refer back to when discussing a client's progress."

- "Helped provide a structured opening conversation with clients that looks at their situation holistically"

- "I like the fact that it helped me fully understand the client support needs in different aspects. Using the Outcome Star, I fully understood his global situation and it made it easy to understand where more support was needed."

- "I think the Outcome Star design is very useful in presenting a visual representation of the client's support needs – I think this is quite useful to see where the client is at when they first engage with our service and how we can support them."

- "I liked that it gave clients prompts to talk about their situation in ways that wouldn't usually come up in conversations. I also like how it indicated areas to work on."

- "Showing change: It mapped out changes that had happened and we could discuss whether these changes were a result of support from our service/ other services or whether they were due to independent action. Where change hadn't occurred, it showed how we can improve the service we are delivering."

- "The Integration Star is a really powerful, clear tool that can visualise a client's support needs. I found it a really effective way to determine in which areas a client would benefit from extra support. I think it provokes conversations that highlight support needs that may have otherwise been missed."

- "Completing an Integration Star has an empowering effect in that it gives clients a real idea of their progress and helps them to identify goals to work towards."

- "Giving the client control of their support plan and having a visual tool."

- "Positive visual tool. Will be useful with younger clients too. Assists to contextually clearly state a client's viewpoint and situation. How much progress they have made and areas to focus on."

- "It helps to track the journey of service users, to help to identify other needs of service users, help refer service users to the appropriate service."

- It helps create good and strong relationship between service users and the organisation/ workers as well as other service users.

- "The Star helps to recognise that some refugees who have been in the country for long periods of time are still in the early process of integration. Some might stay at the same stage through their life in the UK. This is due to various reasons including age.  It also helps identify other refugees who are in need and need extra support to access services."

There were also a number of comments about the practicalities of Star completion including time taken, duplication of content covered by the existing process in the organisation, and language barriers. For example:

- "Can be a little time-consuming alongside the existing project documentation. This also depends heavily on the client's level of English and how easily they can understand what is being asked and how their answers correspond to the scale readings."

- "The Outcomes Star was not a problem in itself but replicates what we already cover with our different assessments."

- "Many of the more practical tick-box elements that are included in our current system are not included in the Star. If we switched to the Star I would also need some other tick-box kind of sheet to run alongside it, in order to keep track of these more practical 'when-you've-just-arrived-in-country' type elements."

- "It was time-consuming with an interpreter. I felt as the client was struggling to understand the questions.

- "I didn't try this with anyone with low English through an interpreter and we don't have much access to interpreters within our service so this would be an ongoing challenge."

- "Potentially relies on project worker breaking down the sections and ensuring that all bases are covered, and the discussion is thorough and meaningful. Have to create own subsections and prompts, which is not a problem if know client well and have a thorough grasp of job role. May be a problem if less confident. Relationship between worker and client is key for good responses and useful process."

# Details of the psychometric analyses of the pilot Integration Star™

**The distribution of initial Star readings across the Journey of Change stages during the pilot of the Integration Star™**



**Starting points**
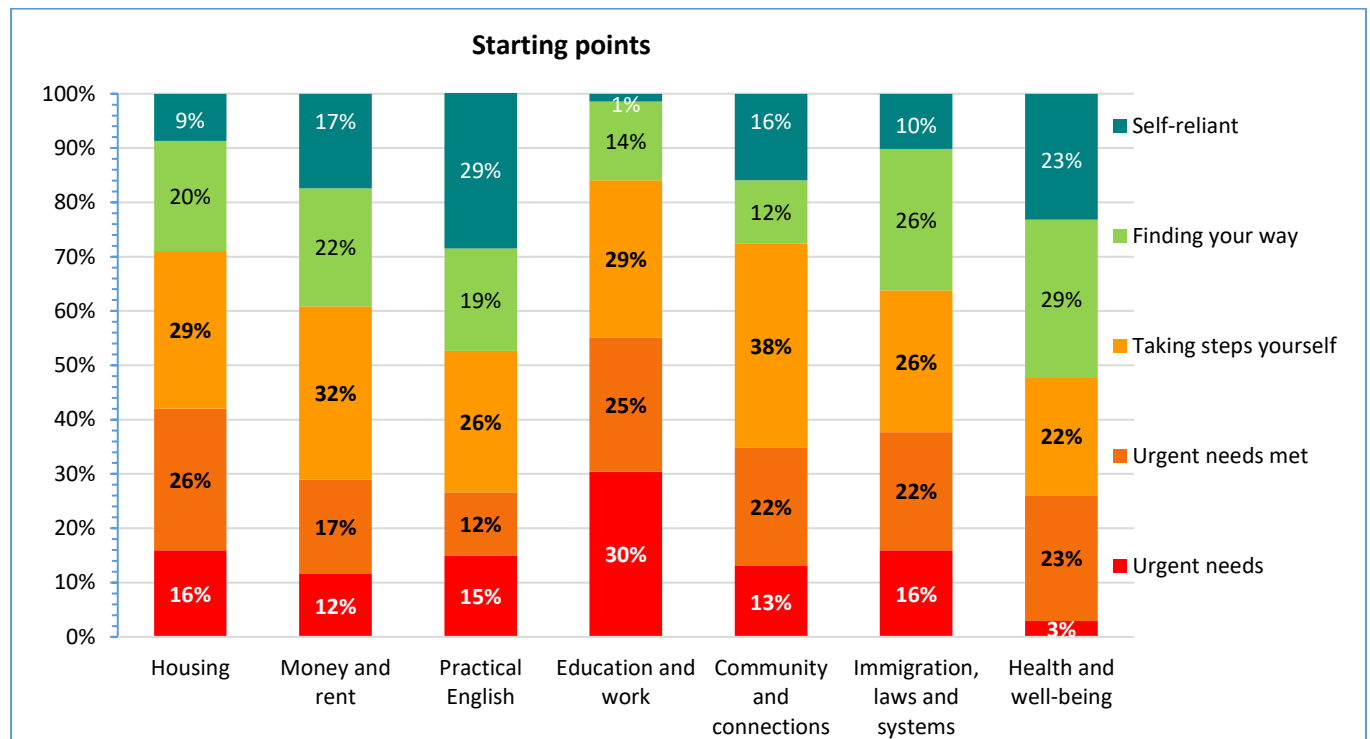
| | Skewness statistic | Result |
|---|---|---|
| **Housing** | .14 | approximately symmetric |
| **Money and rent** | -.12 | approximately symmetric |
| **Practical English** | -.35 | approximately symmetric |
| **Education and work** | .27 | approximately symmetric |
| **Community and connections** | .18 | approximately symmetric |
| **Immigration, laws and systems** | -.05 | approximately symmetric |
| **Health and well-being** | -.19 | approximately symmetric |

# Table showing the pilot Integration Star™ inter-item correlations

**Correlation matrix showing relationships between outcome areas (*N* = 69)**

Correlations should ideally be between .3 and .7. As can be seen below, there are many weak correlations (<.3) – particularly between "Housing", "Money and rent" and the other areas. As discussed above, this suggests that readings should not be combined into a total score.

|  | Housing | Money and rent | Practical English | Education and work | Community and connections | Immigration, laws and systems |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Housing** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Money and rent** | .63 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Practical English** | -.18 | .01 |  |  |  |  |
| **Education and work** | -.01 | .07 | .40 |  |  |  |
| **Community and connections** | .03 | .08 | .27 | .10 |  |  |
| **Immigration, laws and systems** | .24 | .20 | .47 | .25 | .27 |  |
| **Health and well-being** | .13 | .22 | .37 | .17 | .31 | .34 |

Please recycle after use