# BRIEFING

# What Stardata can do

An introduction to using outcomes data collected by all versions of the Star

**Triangle**

The Outcomes Star is an innovative family of tools to support effective keywork and measure service user outcomes in frontline services.

There are over 30 different versions of the Star, each tailored to a specific sector or group of service users.

The Outcomes Star is a validated outcomes measure, as research into the psychometric properties of the Outcomes Star has shown that it performs well.

The Star can provide insight and evidence at many levels, as individual service user data can be aggregated and averaged to give an overall picture. The Star Online system provides basic ready-made reports and the raw data can also be analysed in several more advanced ways.

This briefing includes four different examples of Star data in action. All examples are fictional but based on real life information.

Outcomes Star data is:

- Based on defined numerical and qualitative scales - called the Journey of Change - for a holistic set of outcome areas
- Measuring engagement with challenges, not just severity
- A measure of distance-travelled when completed over time
- Co-reported – based on professional and individual service user judgement
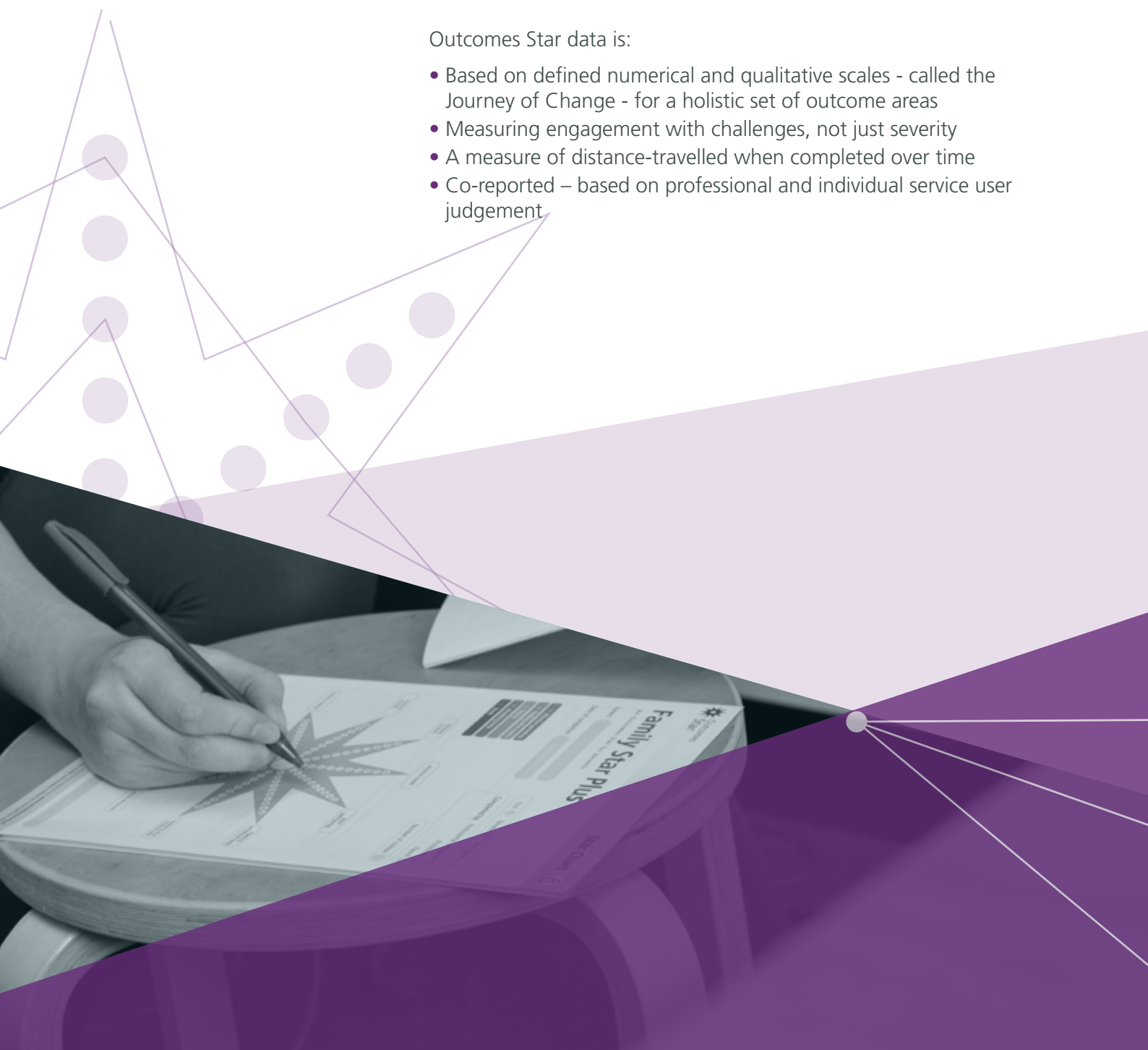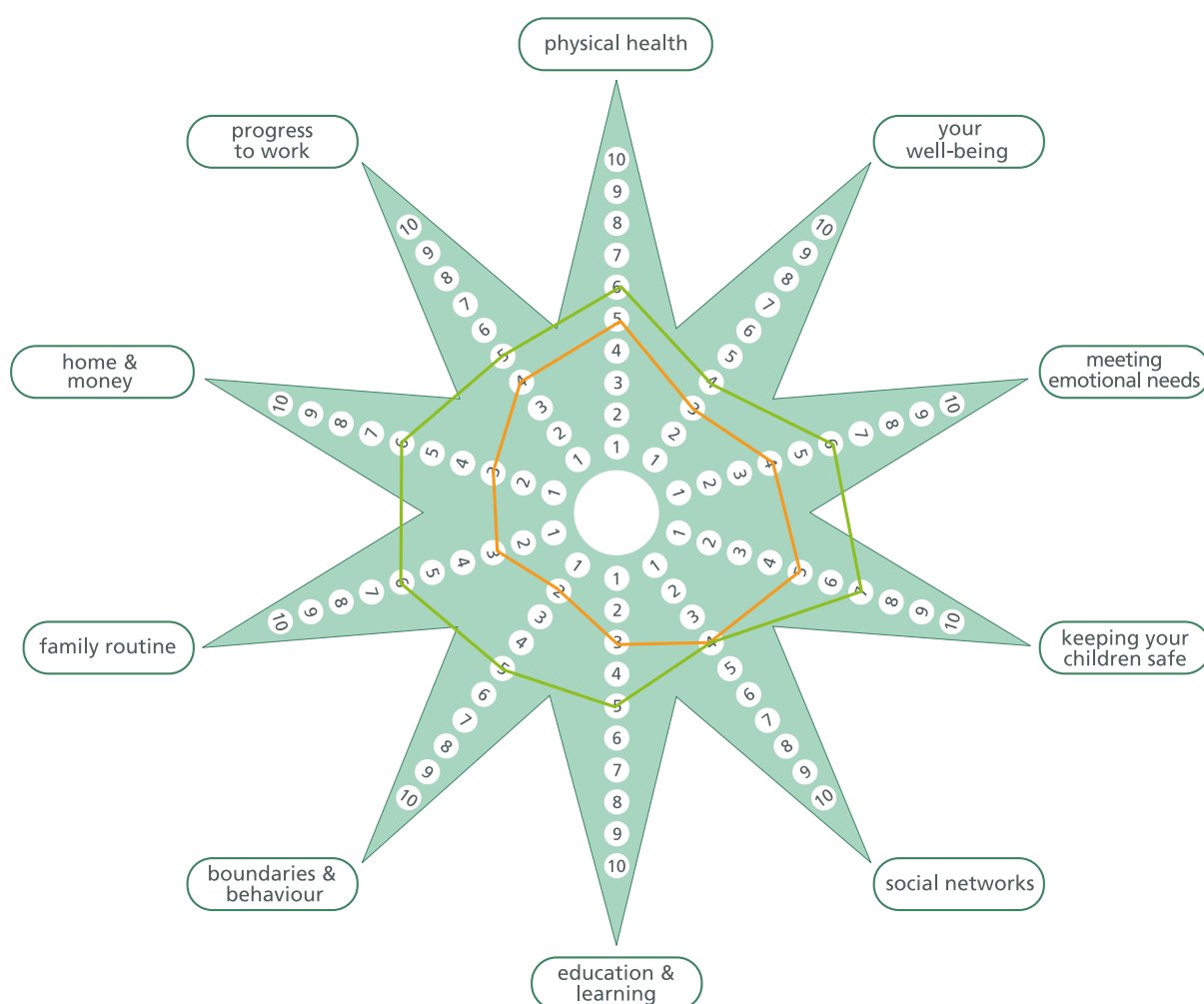
**Example 1:**

At the individual service user level, Star data can help someone's motivation to change, and inform actions plans so that they are more targeted and effective.

Using Family Star Plus data with Paula, a parent receiving support from her local council's Early Help service.

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

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

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



**Completed Family Star Plus chart showing change from initial reading to review reading**

**Key to lines:** —— First reading   —— Review reading

## Example 2:

Individual Star data can also be aggregated, and when explored at service level, it can help service managers monitor service performance and to learn about the cohort of service users being supported.

Using the Young Person's Star data as a service manager to see if a youth mentoring service is working with young people with appropriate levels of need.

Life Connect use the Young Person's Star with young people in the county, to support their mentors in consistently focusing on outcomes and in empowering young people to take ownership of their own action plans.

One of Life Connect's programmes was funded by the Local Authority and specifically targeted at mentoring very vulnerable young people.

The service manager wanted to check that the referral criteria they were using for the programme matched this targeted group and that the programme met the funding criteria.

They created a bar chart to look at initial readings. The chart showed that in most outcomes areas, at least half of the young people in the funded programme were already getting there or independent. Few service users had significant needs in terms of Practical life skills, People and support or Money and rent.

Sharing this data with the programme team allowed them to work with the referral agencies and clarify the remit of the programme. The service manager plans to do the same exercise in two months' time and expects to see more young people joining the service with higher levels of need in more outcome areas.
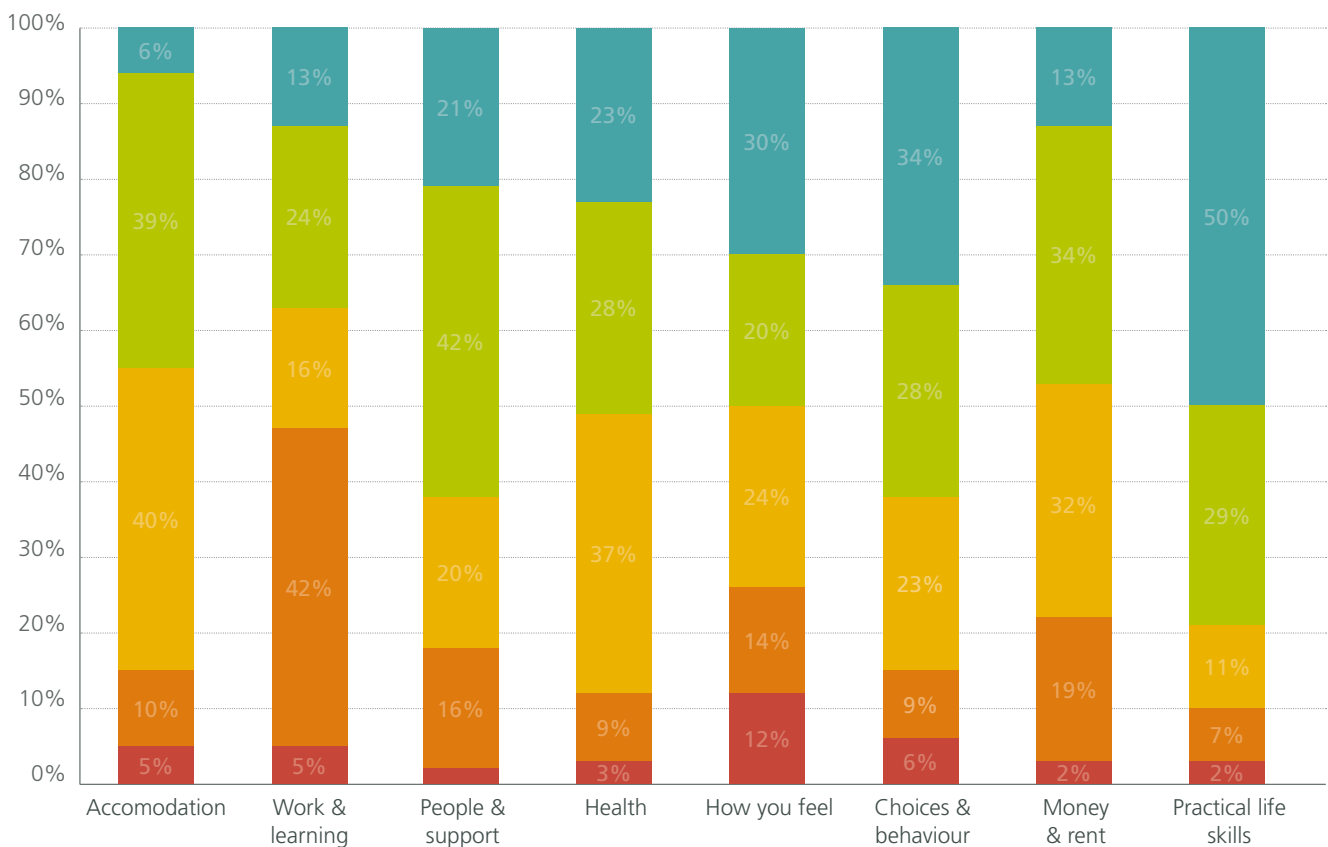


**Stacked bar chart showing starting points across the Journey of Change**

**Key:** ■ Stuck  ■ Accepting help  ■ Trying to sort things out  ■ Getting there with support  ■ Independent

**Example 3:**

By measuring the difference between an early Star and a later reading, services can show where change is achieved (or not) and to what extent. Breaking this down into the outcome areas covered by a Star provides a more granular picture of what outcomes are being achieved, and can help to highlight gaps or needs in service provision.
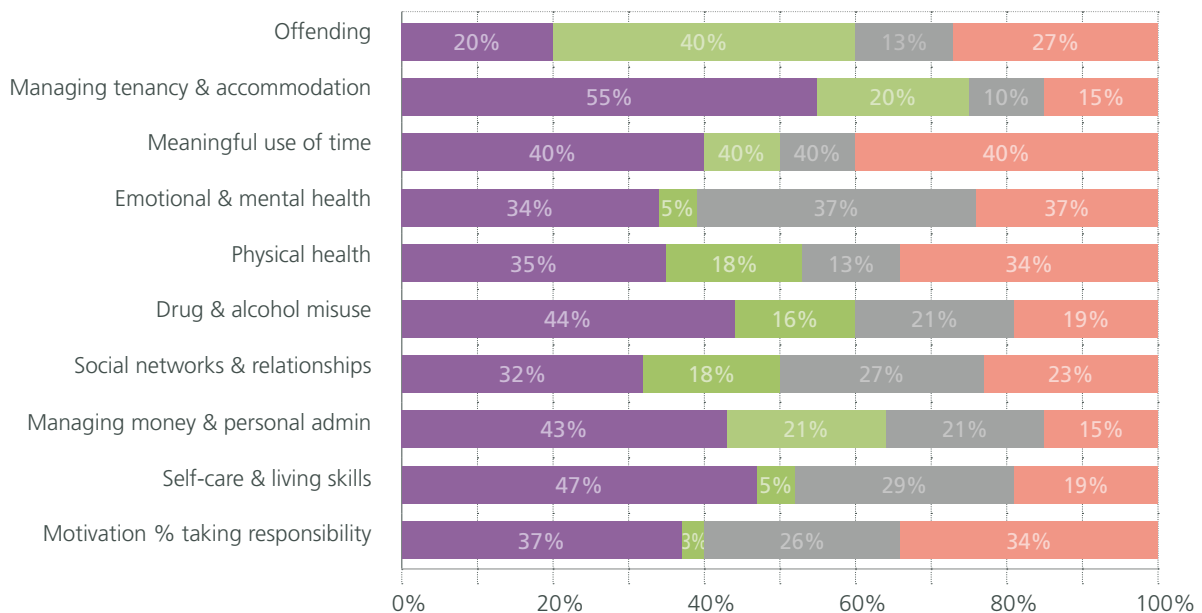
Using Outcomes Star for homelessness data in a funding bid from a homelessness charity.

A homelessness charity provides one-to-one support to people who join their day centre and are experiencing street homelessness. They use the Star to structure and measure the impact of this one-to-one support over time.

They needed to submit a funding bid to an existing funder for continuing funds and had the opportunity to make the case for additional funding in areas where it could have a positive impact for service users.

They created a bar chart to show the movement of service users in each outcome area. In the funding bid, they used Star data to show that three quarters of service users were either maintaining self-reliance or moving towards this in the Managing tenancy and accommodation area. The chart showed how nearly half of service users were showing positive movement with a key outcome area of Self-care and living skills.

They also highlighted how Emotional and mental health is a challenging area to achieve positive outcomes, with a relatively large proportion of service users who had an issue with this either slipping back or failing to progress along the Journey of Change. They made the case for additional funding for counselling services to focus on this area.

| Outcome area | Moving forward | Staying at self-reliant | No change | Slipping back |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Offending | 20% | 40% | 13% | 27% |
| Managing tenancy & accommodation | 55% | 20% | 10% | 15% |
| Meaningful use of time | 40% | 40% | 40% | 40% |
| Emotional & mental health | 34% | 5% | 37% | 37% |
| Physical health | 35% | 18% | 13% | 34% |
| Drug & alcohol misuse | 44% | 16% | 21% | 19% |
| Social networks & relationships | 32% | 18% | 27% | 23% |
| Managing money & personal admin | 43% | 21% | 21% | 15% |
| Self-care & living skills | 47% | 5% | 29% | 19% |
| Motivation % taking responsibility | 37% | 3% | 26% | 34% |

**Bar chart showing the movement of service users in different outcome areas**

**Key:** Moving forward ■ Staying at self-reliant ■ No change ■ Slipping back

"From a commissioner's perspective, I see how the Star can improve the information we receive from providers. It allows us to see outcomes data for individual service users, an overall picture of positive change for all service users as well as helping us identify which outcomes are more difficult to shift and where there are gaps in service provision – all of which can inform service development." Commissioner

## Example 4:

For organisations with more than one service using the same version of the Star, aggregating Star data and focusing on one key metric, such as the percentage of service users moving forward in at least one outcome area as in the example below, can provide a useful snapshot of outcomes being achieved across an organisation.
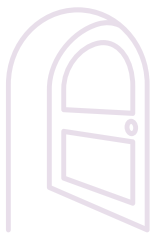
Using Recovery Star data to report to a Board of Trustees for a mental health charity on how different services in the organisation are achieving change with the service users they support.

A mental health charity uses the Recovery model and the Star to make sure the voice of the service user is listened to and that their own personal outcomes are identified and form a central part of their support plan. They have an annual meeting with the service managers and trustees and have one year of Star data to share, collected with 1000 service users across ten different services.

They created a chart to compare how many service users moved forward across all services and this was presented at the meeting alongside more detailed information about the remit and approach of each service and personal stories of individual service users.

At the annual meeting, it was discussed that the chart shows that in six services at least nine out of ten service users had moved forward. It was also highlighted that a much smaller proportion of service users moved forward in Service Four compared to other services, although the context of the service as being in a more secure setting and working with people with higher levels of need was discussed as being linked to this.

The action agreed was that there would be further exploration of differences between services in terms of the level of service user need and the extent of the positive movement amongst service users who had moved along the Journey of Change. Service managers would then meet to share good practice and identify resource needs and differences between services.
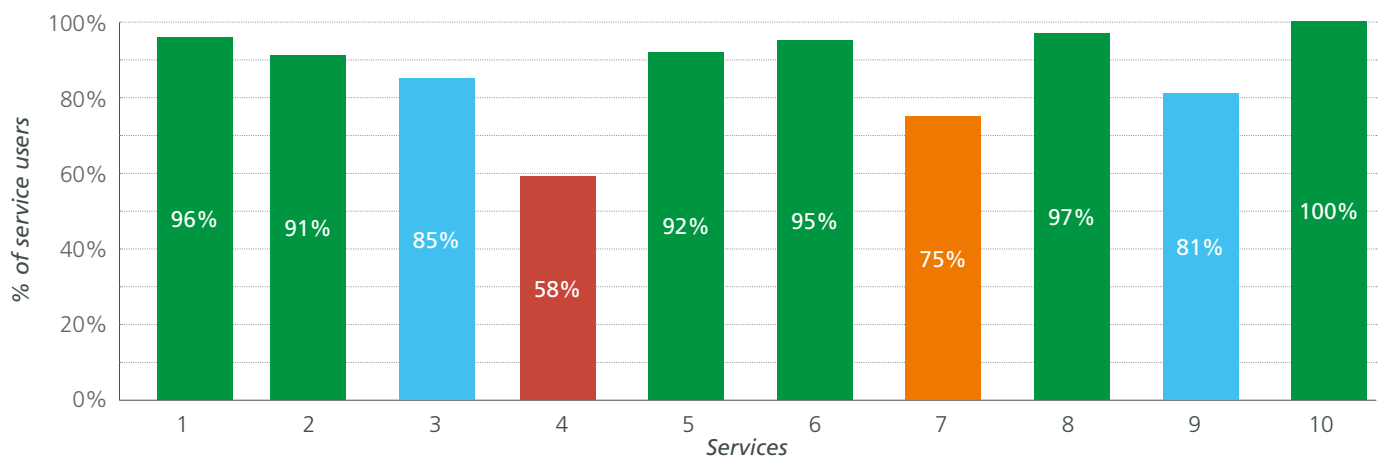


Comparing services: Percentage of service users moving forward in one or more areas

Key: ■ 90%-100% improved ■ 80-90% ■ 70-80% ■ 60-70% ■ 50-60% ■ >50%

# Support and next steps
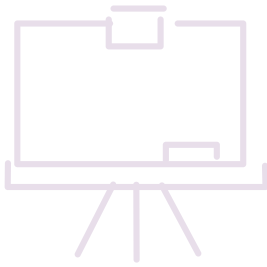
To achieve the benefits of Star data, it is vital Star data is accurate and meaningful, with frontline staff using the Star well and with early and ongoing management of Star implementation.

An effective IT solution is also important. Triangle offer an intuitive online system specifically to support effective use of the Star (**www.staronline.org.uk**) as well as licences to include Star functionality in third-party approved software and case management systems, or for services to use the Star on paper and create basic spreadsheets.

For more information, including case studies showing how Star data has been used, please visit our website **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

To talk to us about Star data and how we can help you as a service provider, manager or funder/commissioner, please get in touch on **info@triangleconsulting.co.uk** or +44 (0)20 7272 8765.

**To get the most out of the Star, it is important to recognise that individual change is complex, and so Star data should not be used as a blunt performance management tool. Instead, Star data should provide a basis for asking better questions. Triangle believe that it is organisations who are continually learning about themselves and the work they do, that make the biggest difference in people's lives.**

# Triangle

## The social enterprise behind the Outcomes Star™

Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise is an innovative, mission-led organisation that exists to help people reach their highest potential and live meaningful and fulfilling lives, often in the context of social disadvantage, trauma, disability or illness.

We do this by creating and supporting the Outcomes Star and other tools to unlock the potential of both individuals and the workers and organisations who support them. We believe that by balancing clear thinking, human connection and action – using the head, heart and hands – we can make a real difference in the world.

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