

CASE STUDY

Using the Stars with children and young people

How the Outcomes Stars can help to capture the voice of a child and support collaborative conversations

Outcomes Stars are evidence-based tools that both support and measure change. There are several different versions of the Outcomes Star available for use with children and young people, each developed in collaboration with frontline services and service users. These case studies provide a snapshot of several different Stars and how they are used by two different services, each supporting children and young people to thrive.

My Star and Southampton City Council's Targeted and Restorative Services – Family Partnership Team

Southampton City Council use several Outcomes Stars in their services for families and children and have a Licensed Star Trainer in the organisation supporting people to use the Stars well.



For the Family Partnership Team, My Star is just one of several tools that they can use during the process of a Child Protection Meeting, to capture the voice of the child and to bring a child's perspective into the discussion. They work with children from the age of seven.

Lesley Weeks, Family Partnership Team Leader, explains that practitioners can choose from several tools, such as the Three Houses® model, but that "often practitioners will choose My Star because of the child-friendly resources" and because it provides a comprehensive framework for a conversation with the child.

For example, Lesley explains "our play therapist recently completed the Star with a child who was on the autistic spectrum. She got out a small sandbox for the child to play with and be busy with, whilst they used the Star flashcards and chatted about the different areas of the Star, with the

therapist making notes. The teacher said to us that she had never heard the child open up as much as she did then."

The way the team use the Star is to talk with a child about all the outcome areas with a child first, letting them talk about what life is like for them, in areas such as "where you live," "being safe" and "feelings and behaviour." Then, they go to the Star Chart and, together with the child, decide which stage they are at in the Journey of Change for each outcome area.

This information is then presented at the Child Protection Meeting and shared with the other professionals involved in the case, bringing the child's voice into the room. Although the team don't currently focus on the action planning aspects of the Star, Lesley is keen to explore how this might develop in the future.

My Star has been developed for use with children and young people in a wide range of settings, My Star such as with children in vulnerable families, children in out-of-home care, and those with foster carers. Where any version of the Family Stars are used with parents, My Star can also be used to capture the child's perspective.

EXAMPLE 2

Shooting Star and Winchester & District Young Carers

As part of the Hampshire Young Carer Alliance, Winchester & District Young Carers support young people with caring responsibilities aged between 8 and 18.



**Hampshire
Young Carers
Alliance**

In recent years the service has moved towards a more defined term-based programme and a drive to reach more young people in the local area. Having originally had training in My Star, Tana Spreadbury, Young Carers Support Worker, explains that their Star licences allowed them to move to using the Shooting Star which was a better fit with their Exploration programme.

The Shooting Star is a less intensive tool than My Star, covering outcome areas such as “aspiration,” “confidence,” and “people and support.”

At the start of the 12-week programme, a young person would complete their first Star together with a support worker in a one-to-one conversation. For Tana, this is one example of where the Star is beneficial – “it’s a good icebreaker. It helps the young person to step away from just thinking about their caring role and helps to put the focus on them as a person.”

Tana explains that then, in the final week of the project, a young person completes the Star again – “they can join the dots and see how the shape of their Star has changed; it’s something tangible and visible.”

Although the Stars are designed to be used in one-to-one settings, it is important that services think about the best way that Stars can work for them and the people they support.

As Tana explains, “it’s important to mix it up and find what works. For example, for the final Star, we found it works well to do it as a big group. The young people fill in their own Star Chart – we are there to help them, and they discuss it with each other. It’s more time effective, but it also helps to celebrate progress and helps people to link up any actions that they are taking forward outside of the programme.”

Tana and team add their Star data to their Lamplight system (a software system approved by Triangle to provide Outcomes Star functionality). This allows them to look at individual young people, and also for the manager, Ben, to aggregate data across the programme.

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The Shooting Star is intended to engage students, stimulate and focus discussion and provide a helpful basis for action plans and goal setting, while providing schools with information about student progress. It was developed by Triangle with Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) and with funding from Nesta and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.