

CASE STUDY

Using Youth Star™ data in Hertfordshire County Council

A case study demonstrating what works with Outcomes Star data in a youth services setting

The Youth Star is designed for use in universal, community-based youth work. Hertfordshire County Council has been using the Youth Star as part of the services they offer.



Hertfordshire County Council, YC Hertfordshire (YCH) delivers a wide range of youth provision across the county's 10 districts, including youth work projects, programmes targeted at vulnerable groups such as young carers or young people with learning disabilities, and fixed term preventative programmes.

In order to evidence the impact of the work delivered, YCH implemented the Youth Star county-wide in 2013. The implementation was led by the Youth Work Policy Manager, with a train the trainer approach to cascade training to all youth work staff within YCH.

YCH share six key learnings from their implementation of the Youth Star and their use of Star data.

1. Getting the right software and reports is key to managing implementation

"At first workers were completing a lot of first Stars with young people but we didn't have many second Stars. As the data was stored on an internal system, we were able to develop bespoke reports and provide teams with a list of service users who were due to have second Star readings. This improved the number of second readings that were undertaken."

"We have also produced regular raw data reports that show the readings for every single service user, and summary reports that show the percentage of people moving up a scale by one, two or more points, staying the same or moving down. These reports can be produced for the whole service, for a specific team or for a specific type of project. We find that reporting on the percentage of service users showing change is more relevant for us than looking at average amount of change and it is easy to communicate to others."

2. The Star helps to structure youth work and draw out important issues for service users

"Using the Star was a change in service delivery culture and a move to working more formally with young people. Staff could see the benefits of using the Youth Star to build a relationship with the young person in order to address their needs. Even experienced youth workers found

"Staff could see the benefits of using the Youth Star to build a relationship with the young person in order to address their needs."



that it helped to structure their conversation with the young person, helping them to get a holistic view of the situation, and not just focusing on the presenting issue. Some staff struggled with the need to challenge young peoples' perceptions as to which stage of the Star they were on as they did not want to demoralise the young person. However, as staff confidence has increased with the Youth Star, they have developed the skills to have these challenging conversations."

3. The Outcomes Star helps to focus on those most in need

"One of the first things that became evident when we started looking at the Star data was that in some provision there were a lot of young people whose readings were right up at the top of the scale in all areas. This indicated that either young people had a very low level of need or there was an inconsistency with the use of the scales. This was addressed through further training. In addition, it has allowed services to target provision on the most vulnerable young people and move resources as appropriate."

4. The Star can help services to set more appropriate targets

"Prior to using the Youth Star, the service used a locally developed recorded outcome tool and accredited outcomes in order to demonstrate the impact of the work delivered."

Whilst these demonstrated that the young people had achieved a certain standard, they did not measure the distance travelled and the impact of the achievement. With the Youth Star we can demonstrate how the young person has developed over time. The Outcomes Star process and the Journey of Change enables services and young people to identify need and to see whether it has been addressed.

We are also starting to review programmes to see whether the observed outcomes are aligned with the planned outcomes. For example, in a programme that has been developed to address risky behaviour, we would expect to see a change in the outcome area 'Choices and Behaviour'."



82% of young people who attended the programme showed a positive development in personal and social skills

"Using the Star helps to ensure that a youth workers conversation covers all relevant areas – not just the ones that were most obviously needing attention." – Development Manager



5. Reporting the number of people reaching landmarks on the Star scales works well

"We provide summary reports of the Youth Star data (alongside other data) for members, contract managers and the Senior Managers. Star data is reported by giving the number and percentage of young people who have demonstrated development, as defined by the scales and Journey of Change in the Youth Star.

For example:

"Through attending the programme 98 (82%) of young people showed a positive development in the personal and social skills of which 65% were actively working on staying safe and staying out of trouble."

This, along with anecdotal evidence, puts the work into context for decision makers."

6. The Star can support a realistic approach to assessing impact

"There has been a lot of talk in our sector about demonstrating the impact of youth work in terms of cost savings. Whilst the Outcomes Star does not directly show impact as cost savings, it can provide evidence of the impact that youth work has on a young person and, therefore, the potential impact it can have on their long-term outcomes. What we want to do is to reduce the number of young people that reach a crisis point and need to access high intensity, high cost services by providing young people with the support they need early."

Focusing on the quality of the data

"Going forward from here, our focus is going to be on working with team leaders and managers to help them get more from their own data by using it in team meetings and staff supervision to ensure consistency of readings across the service."

Thank you to Hertfordshire County Council and YCH for their contribution to this case study.

"The Star can provide evidence of the impact that youth work has on a young person and, therefore, the potential impact it can have on their long-term outcome"

The Youth Star™ in overview

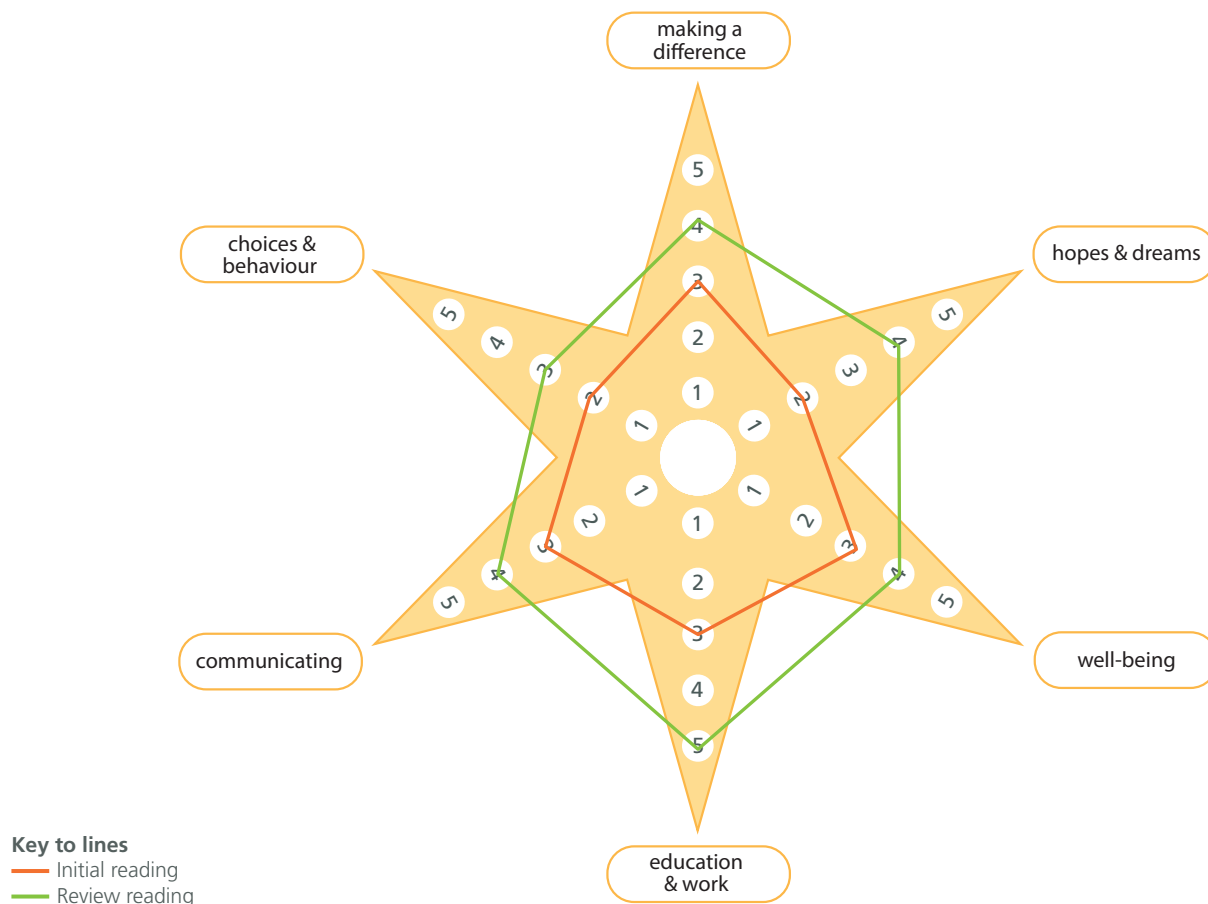
The Youth Star is an Outcomes Star for youth work.

It was developed by Triangle in collaboration with Groundwork UK in response to new UK statutory guidance encouraging local authorities to focus efforts on vulnerable young people.

The Youth Star captures where young people are and their progress in six areas of their lives and measures their progress along a five stage Journey

of Change. The Youth Star includes a pocket-style quiz to make it easy and quick to use with young people.

Full resources are available for organisations with a Star Licence and training for all workers and managers using the Star. This Star is also available in Welsh.



Triangle

More information and next steps

Visit our website for previews of the Star, guidance and information:
www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Triangle are the social enterprise behind the Outcomes Star, based in the UK. If you are not based in the UK, please visit our website for the contact details of organisations supporting the Outcomes Star internationally.

Find out more

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The Youth Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a family of tools copyrighted and developed by Triangle for supporting and measuring change when working with people.



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