



Development Report

Planning Star™

The Outcomes Star for young asylum seekers

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Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to enquire about buying a licence and training.

Licences may be available for those wishing to translate this report into other languages.

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.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of the Outcomes Star over its long evolution and we would like to thank all the clients, workers, managers, funders, academics and commissioners who have generously given their time and expertise.

The original commission for an outcome measurement system came from St Mungo's, with financial support from the London Housing Foundation, and Triangle recognises their vital roles in the development of the Outcomes Star. We would also like to acknowledge Kate Graham's important contribution to the development of the suite of Stars as a founding partner of Triangle.

We would particularly like to thank South East Strategic Partnership for Migration and Pathways to Independence UK as the collaborators for the development of this version of the Star.

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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 measurement¹. 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

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 than being 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 co-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 focusing on 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 Planning Star

The Planning Star is for use with children and young people who have come to this country as unaccompanied asylum-seekers. It could also be used with children and young people who have come to this country to settle with relatives here.

The Planning Star includes the following resources:

- The Planning Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan for use with young people
- The Planning 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 support engagement of young people
- Guidance for Workers, providing guidance on how to use the Planning Star
- A web application for online completion and analysis at www.staronline.org.uk

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

Development Process for the Planning 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 need for and scope of 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 Planning Star.

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

The number of asylum-seeking children (UASC) being supported by local authorities in the UK increased in the period prior to publication of this tool. For many local authorities, supporting UASC is a relatively new requirement and there is a lack of experience and resources needed to support these children or to fully meet their needs.

Pathways to Independence UK have worked with young people seeking asylum since 2006, supporting more than 400 young people from point of arrival in the UK to independence and integration or possible return to home country. Their expertise with this client group is in demand both as a service provider for a number of local authorities in the South East of England and in an advisory capacity.

UASC have an additional and complex set of needs in comparison to other vulnerable young people in the UK, and Pathways to Independence highlighted a need for an outcomes measurement tool specifically designed to recognise, include and meet these needs.

This tool would encourage best practice across the sector, ensuring young people receive the right level of support where and when they need it. It could also serve to standardise support locally and nationally for unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum, where expertise has previously been clustered and fragmented.

The tool could also be designed to ensure that triple-track planning – planning for uncertain immigration status, for permanent permission to remain, or for return to the country of origin – is embedded in all work with young people seeking asylum. This is essential in preparing children for all outcomes and supporting them in understanding the choices they face as they go through the asylum system.

Pathways to Independence and the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration approached Triangle to develop a new version of the Outcomes Star that would support the young people they work with.

Triangle then carried out a scoping process, involving:

- An exploratory literature review
- 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

This scoping highlighted that the key focus of work with young people seeking asylum is to enable them to integrate and to mix with young people from their own culture and also from other cultures, as well as supporting education and developing language skills. Navigating the asylum process was also identified as a major focus. The local authorities in the SESPM vary in their work with young people seeking asylum – some have a specific UASC team and in some areas this work is part of the Safeguarding team

As with any new version of the Star, this phase also included scoping the capacity for both Pathways to Independence UK and Triangle to undertake the development within the budget and timescale needed.

Based on this, Triangle's conclusion was to proceed with the development in collaboration with the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) and Pathways to Independence. They then obtained funding for the development from the Home Office Controlling Migration Fund. The funding bid was hosted by Brighton and Hove City Council on behalf of the local authorities in the South East region. It was agreed that when the Star was published, it would be rolled out, initially within as many as possible of the 19 local authorities in the South East and then nationally, to support consistency in approach when working with young people.

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

An expert working group was established comprising 16 professionals working with young people seeking asylum.

This expert group played a central role throughout the development process, providing the 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 and some separate interviews. The first two workshops 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 three focus groups with service users, accompanied by workers who knew them so that they could support service users to contribute meaningfully.

Workshop 1 (17th July 2018): A one-day workshop was held to identify intended outcomes and processes of change in work supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from arrival in the UK. This workshop was attended by a working group made up of 16 professionals (five from Triangle, two from Pathways to Independence, one from a charity (The Enthum Foundation) and eight from local authorities in the South East). The workshop included a series of focus groups to provide insight about their experiences and the positive outcomes they aim to enable the children 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 involved 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 interviews and 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 Planning Star was developed. These were then used as an outline or “skeleton”, from which the first draft of the Planning 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, a focus group with service users (4th September 2018), in-depth interviews with five professionals working with young people seeking asylum and a second workshop with the expert working group.

Workshop 2 (23rd October 2018): A one-day workshop was held to present the first draft of the Planning 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 Planning Star with the Journey of Change and outcome areas listed below:

The pilot Planning Star
Journey of Change

5. Managing well
4. Building
3. Getting some stability
2. Working together
1. Not working together

The pilot Planning Star
Outcome Areas

1. Where you live
2. Education and work
3. Physical health
4. Understanding the system
5. Friends and activities
6. How you feel
7. Immigration process

Stage 3: The pilot

Triangle trained 30 workers from within five local authority departments to use the Planning Star in November 2018 (East Sussex County Council, Through Care Service – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; Milton Keynes Borough Council, Corporate Parenting Team; Brighton and Hove City Council, Children's Social Work Services – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; Surrey County Council, Asylum Team; and Hampshire County Council, Children in Care Team and Care Leavers Team). They then piloted the Star with 116 of their clients over a four-month pilot period. Of these, 55 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 27 completed questionnaires from clients who had used the Planning Star during the pilot period, of whom 89% said the completed Star was “a good summary of my life right now” and “highlighted my support needs”.

Summary of analysis of worker feedback forms

Triangle received 11 feedback forms from workers completing the Star with clients. All of these workers said that they found it “encouraging to see the progress made between Star readings” and 81% said that the Star “gave them a better idea of service users’ support needs”.

Psychometric analyses of the pilot Star data

Analyses of the Star data from the 116 initial Star readings and 55 second Star readings showed the following:

Distribution. Readings were normally distributed across the Journey of Change, for the “Where you live” and “Understanding the system” areas. There was moderate skew towards the higher end of the Journey of Change for the other areas but many service users had been supported for some time when they completed their first Star readings.

Item redundancy. All inter-item correlations were below .70, so there was no indication of item redundancy.

Internal consistency and factor structure. Cronbach’s alpha was .76, indicating good internal consistency, and factor analysis suggested a unidimensional structure explaining 55% of the real-data variance.

Responsiveness. The effect size was medium for “Physical health”, small to medium for “Education and work” and “Understanding the system” and small for the remaining outcome areas. It is likely that effect sizes would have been larger if first Stars had been completed on entry to the service as many service users had been in the service for some time and had first Star readings of 5 (**managing well**) so could not move forward.

See the Appendix for more detail on the 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 Planning Star was initiated following publication. For the latest information on this, please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk.

Stage 4: Finalising the new Star

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

Workshop 3 (7th May 2019): The third and final meeting of the expert working group gathered in-depth feedback on the process of using the tool with a wide range of people in

different contexts and 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 Planning Star and the responses are briefly summarised below.

What worked in the pilot Planning Star?

- The Planning Star worked well with service users aged 16 and older and most people in services are this age
- The Star opened up conversations about many issues
- It worked well to complete the Star alongside/instead of the Pathway Plan and to put actions onto the Pathway plan. Young people preferred the Star and it didn't take as long and was visual. The Star also helped with writing visit notes
- The Star Action Plan was useful in identifying the top three things that were important.
- It worked well to have a tool that is visual and engaging as a focus of the conversation. The visual aspect helped with seeing where things relate to each other
- The "How you feel" area was particularly useful. Service users are often at the low end of the scale on this, and the other areas offer an opportunity to open up conversation as to why this area is a problem
- Young people liked the ownership of Star and felt that it empowered them – usually people write about them.
- The Journey of Change meant that it could be explained that 1 isn't awful – that it is a journey
- It was meaningful to compare initial and follow up readings – young people loved seeing the progress made.

What didn't work in the pilot Planning Star?

- Sometimes the Star couldn't be completed in one session as it opened up a lot of conversations
- It was sometimes overwhelming for younger children who needed more basic information
- Young people didn't want to focus on where they lived or the future

- Some professionals suggested it might help to also have a visual of authority – who’s who in national government, local government, the role of police and the Home Office
- There were no areas on identity or finances
- More emphasis needed to be given to family and access to wifi to contact family at home or in other countries. This was covered within the “How you feel” area but perhaps needed more emphasis
- More emphasis was needed on early lives – culture, family and impact on young people now and their sense of who they are
- The pilot version was called the Asylum Star – one young person said they were a refugee so felt it didn’t apply to them.

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

- Changes were made to the stage names of the Journey of Change at stages 1-4. The old stages (**not working together, working together, getting some stability and building**) became **it’s not OK, accepting help, stable and learning for yourself**. The more substantial changes at 1 and 2 widened the stages so that they are not so much based on trust and feelings of safety (but still include them)
- The “Where you live” scale includes more on planning for living independently
- The “Education and work” scale was changed to “Education, activities and work” to include activities and interests (formerly covered in the “Friends and activities scale”. More emphasis was put on speaking, reading and writing English
- The revised “Physical health” scale included references to being in pain
- The “Friends and activities” scale was renamed “People and support network” with a change of focus to the friends and supportive adults who help support young people in settling and doing well
- A new scale – “Money” was added
- The “Understanding the system” scale was renamed “Understanding life in the UK” and included more on knowing your rights
- References to using alcohol or drugs as a way to feel OK were included in the “How you feel” scale. Formerly there were references to drinking with the wrong crowd in the “Friends and activities” but these were removed in the rewritten “People and support network” scale
- The “Immigration process” scale was given a different Journey of Change name at stage 4 – **getting there**.

Completion

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

1. Pathways to Independence 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 Planning Star was published in July 2019, just over a year after the start of the development process.

References

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

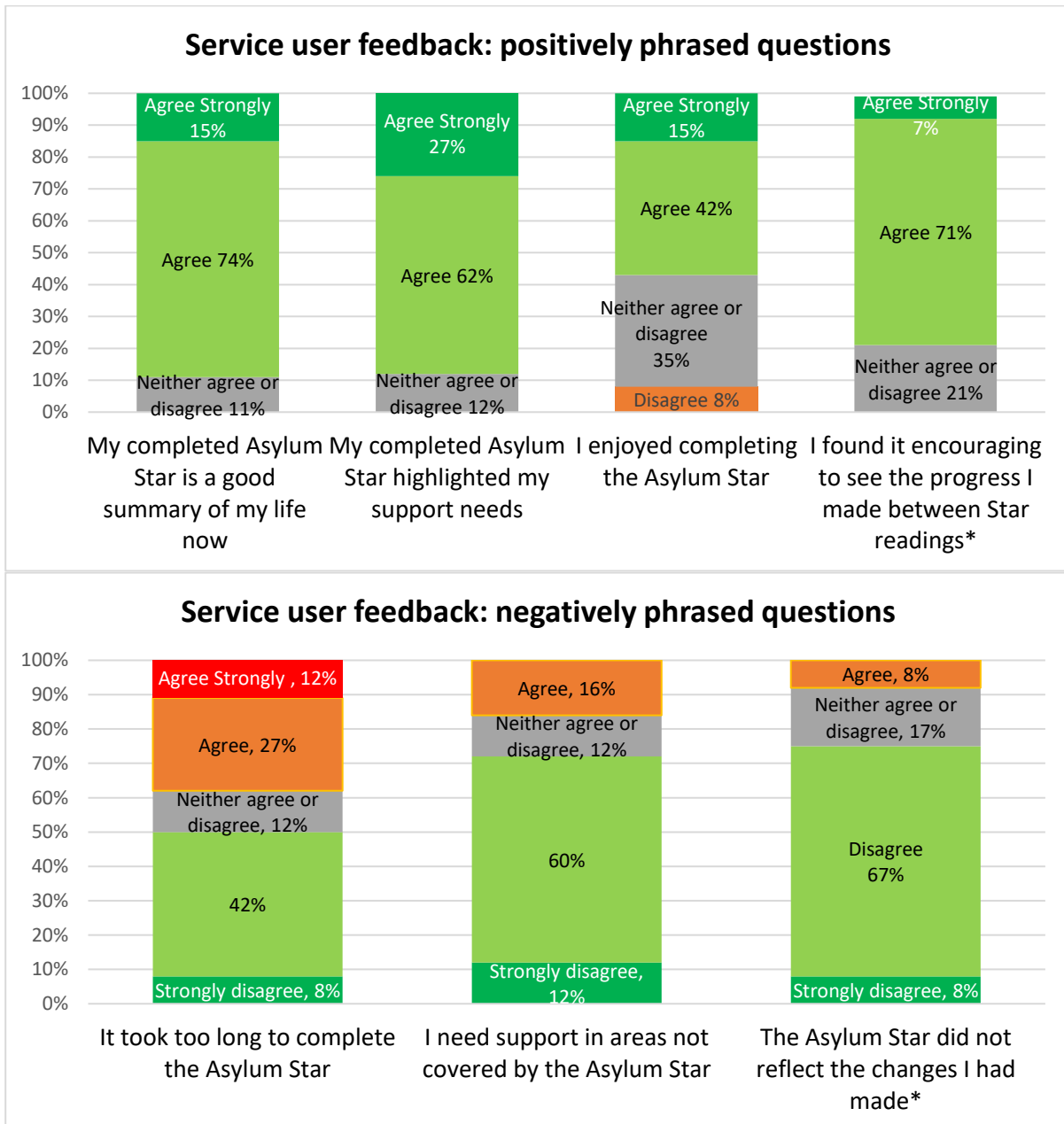
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McCall, R. (1983) *Phenomenological Psychology*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

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Appendix

Service user feedback (27 responses) following the Planning Star™ pilot



*These questions were responded to by 14 service users

Open-ended responses

Positive feedback

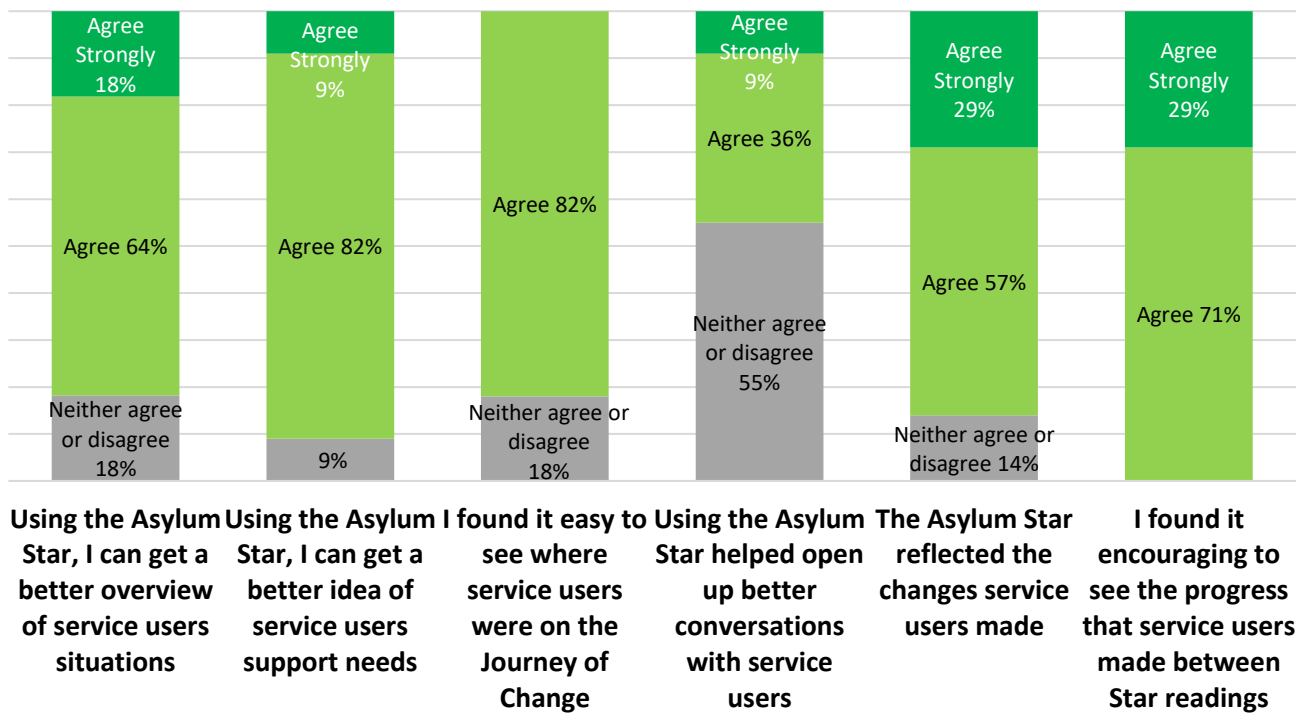
- “Like the colours – nice organisation”
- “I did enjoy filling this form because it was easy to comprehend
- “I did like talking about immigration”
- “I enjoyed it because it makes me understand about what I need to learn”
- “Shows me where I need help in my life. Easy to see”
- “Good to talk”
- “For me, I think it is easy and simple”
- “I learned something. I like everything and it will help me”
- “It is fine. Reminds me to think about my life more”
- “The Outcomes Star helped me to plan some actions with my PA. We put a date with this so I knew when would complete this”
- “It helped to set up specific actions”
- “It helped visually to identify where I am at the moment and what needs to happen to achieve my goals”
- “I realised I have progressed a lot since I arrived in the UK”
- “It helped me see what to do next about everything, and makes me learn more about life.”

Negative comments / suggested improvements

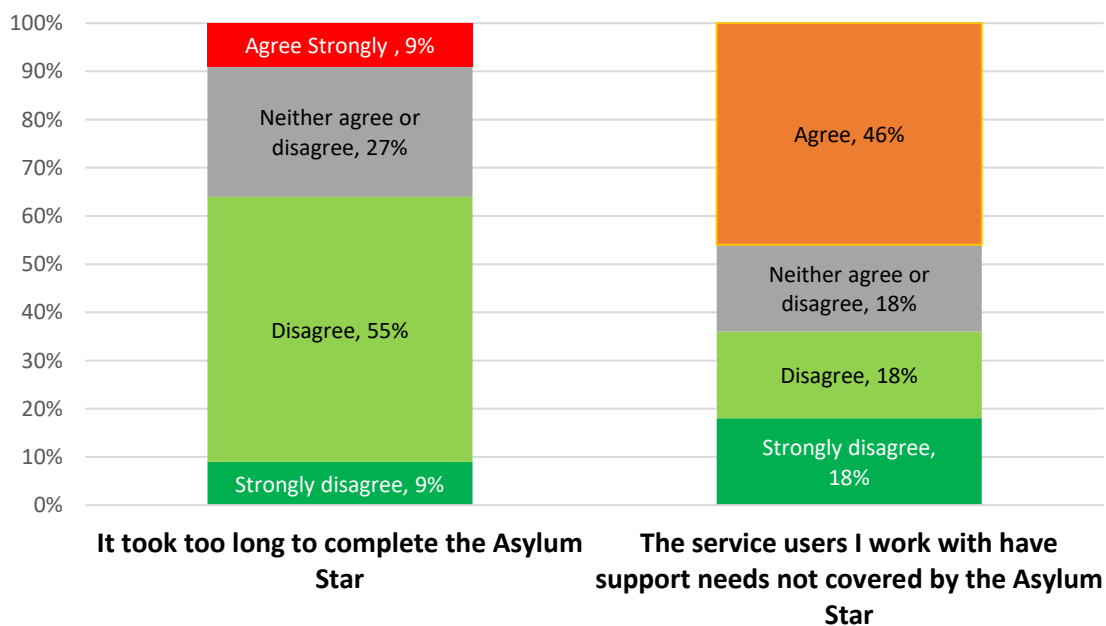
- “It was hard to understand due to the language barrier”
- “‘Where you live’ and ‘How you feel’ – wording can be confusing.
- “Need more support in moving on to independence (not covered by the Star)”
- “‘Understanding the system’ should be changed to ‘Understanding the UK system’
- “It took too long”
- “I didn't like talking about my past”

Worker feedback (11 responses) following the Planning Star™ pilot

Positively phrased questions



Negatively phrased questions



Open-ended responses

“What did you like about the Asylum Star?”

- “Most young people agreed it was a good summary of life now and although they did not necessarily enjoy completing it, they were willing to do it”
- “The sections on immigration are relevant to the young people and as a project worker I was able to identify actions needed - even when young person had status”
- “The Outcomes Star includes a new area – ‘Understanding the system’. This topic is not directly approached by the Pathway plan and very useful when working with asylum seekers”
- “Categories to break down conversation barriers and identify where support is need for young person”
- “Opens up helpful conversations. Offers reflective time with young people”
- “It was concise and easy to use, enabling young people to discuss their support needs in a way that didn't make them feel they weren't doing very well. It gave a good opportunity to talk about support and developing skills.”
- “I like the visual element and the ability to track change”
- “The visual aspect - it looks nice”
- “Useful tool, incorporated with CCR”
- “You can see at a glance how the areas are interrelated (for example if you scaled yourself quite low on ‘Where you live’ and ‘How you feel’, so you think is there a connection here?)”
- “That it made you cover particular subjects and being able to see progress. I like that you can compare your opinions on how the young person is managing”
- “The Asylum Star gives a snapshot and overview of where supports are lacking and where improvement can be applied”
- “I like that the Asylum Star is very visual, and it is easy to see the progression for the young person. The Asylum Star can support the young person in considering their own

goals and thinking about possible actions that they, as well as the professional working with them, can do to achieve their goals”

- “I like that it helps to visualise the young person's progress over time. The format is easy to use for the worker and the young person”
- “It is fairly easy for a young person to understand with varied levels of English.”

“Was there anything you didn't like about the Asylum Star, including any areas not covered?”

Specific points about the outcome areas:

- “Current topics covered are important and useful, however the only aspect not covered is finance which is a key aspect in service users' lives”
- “Family has come up as very important – either grieving for them, tracing or in contact and it is a little buried in the ‘How you feel’ domain”
- “‘Understanding the system’ covers too much ground and is difficult to explain.”

Language/level is a problem:

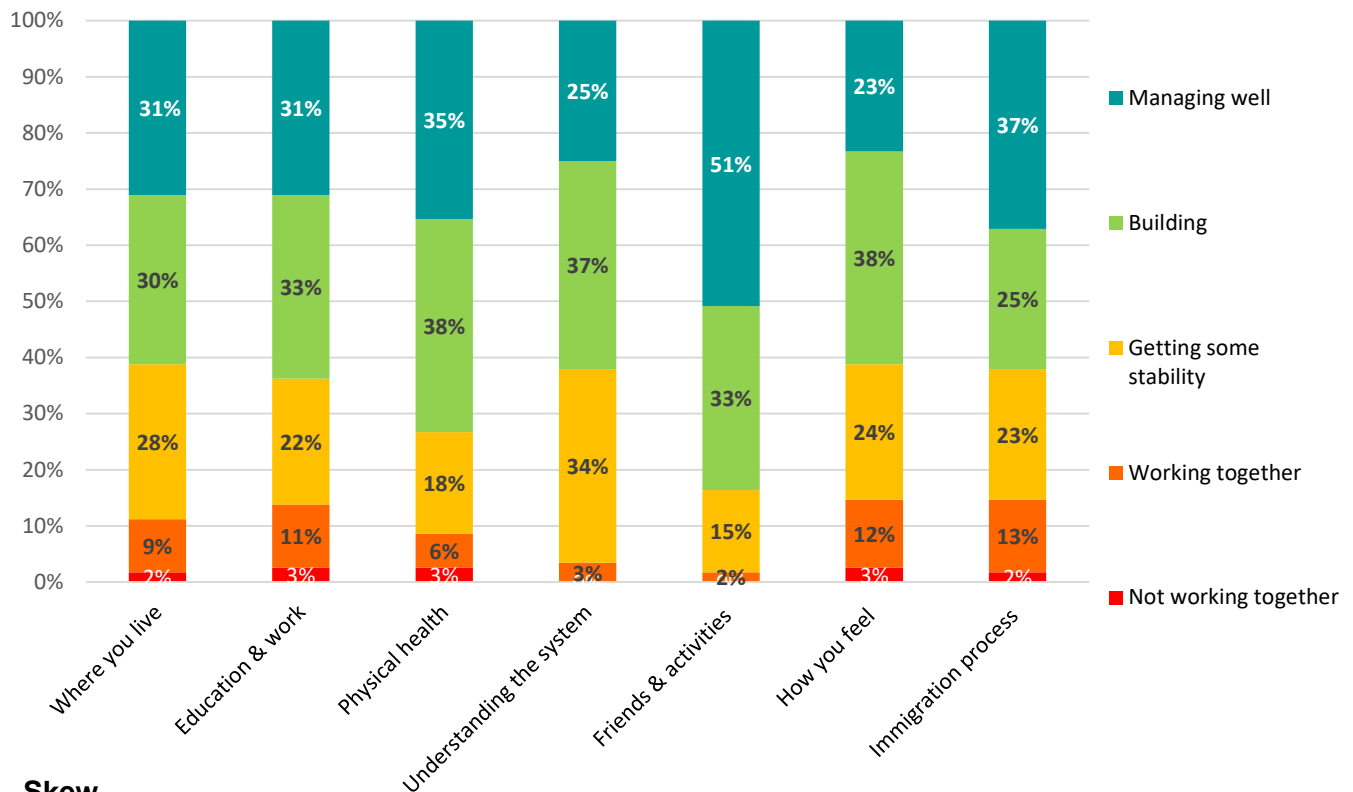
- “For young people who have status or a high level of English, the Outcomes Star seemed too basic and came across as patronising”
- “It was fairly challenging to complete due to some clients' level of English”
- “Can be more challenging for younger children to understand the need for this as they have adults to support them anyway.”

Other:

- “The rating system (1-5) suggests negative connotations especially with a red colour scheme”
- “May trigger some emotions so it is important for the worker to be careful”
- “You could say that the Star is all about identity and sense of self – it is important – it could be more explicit, using those words

Details of the psychometric analyses of the pilot Planning Star™

Distribution of initial Star readings across the Journey of Change stages during the pilot



Skew

	Skewness statistic	Result
Where you live	-.46	Normal
Education & work	-.60	Moderately skewed
Physical health	-.93	Moderately skewed
Understanding the system	-.03	Normal
Friends & activities	-.87	Moderately skewed
How you feel	-.52	Moderately skewed
Immigration process	-.52	Moderately skewed

Table showing the pilot Planning Star™ inter-item correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Where you live						
2 Education & work	.39					
3 Physical health	.46	.37				
4 Understanding the system	.25	.28	.37			
5 Friends & activities	.41	.44	.42	.35		
6 How you feel	.51	.38	.60	.40	.55	
7 Immigration process	.12	.25	.18	.40	.25	.40

Table showing the results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test to test the responsiveness of the Planning Star™

	First Star median	Final Star median	Z	Effect size r^1
Where you live	4.00	4.00	-0.88	0.08
Education & work	4.00	4.00	-2.84**	0.27
Physical health	4.00	5.00	-3.34**	0.32
Understanding the system	4.00	4.00	-3.00**	0.29
Friends & activities	5.00	5.00	-1.54	0.15
How you feel	4.00	4.00	-1.90	0.18
Immigration process	4.00	5.00	-2.20*	0.21

¹ Many service users had been in the service for some time and were at 5 at their first Star so could not move forward

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