

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION ONLY



UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL OUTCOMES

December 2017

Background
Information

Understanding
Outcomes

Engaging &
Conversation

Recording &
Measuring

Working with
People

Working with Other
Professionals

Leadership &
System Change

Risk &
Challenges

Evidence &
Learning





Who and what is this resource for?

- intended as a starting point for people working in health, social services and housing support
- acknowledges that we are building on existing good practice
- provides an overview of what personal outcomes are
- provides an overview of what a personal outcomes approach means for organisations
- supports the development of a common language about what matters to people which different agencies can work towards
- provides links to diverse resources to support implementation

What are personal outcomes?

The term 'outcomes' has different meanings. When we talk about *personal outcomes* we mean the things that are important to people in their lives.

I want help with getting my confidence back in the kitchen. Home cooking makes a house into a home and the smell of soup on the stove makes me feel I am making a home for my husband and me
Iris, 82, home from hospital after fracturing her femur due to a fall

A focus on personal outcomes means moving away from identifying deficits and matching those to service solutions. Instead this means acknowledging individual strengths and working towards establishing a shared sense of purpose to which everyone can contribute including the person, their family and other community resources as well as services. Many services in Scotland are already working in this way.

Identifying personal outcomes: from fixer to facilitator

Identifying personal outcomes involves conversations with people to achieve a shared understanding about their priorities. Although it is not always possible to achieve everything that matters to people, conversations about what matters are important in their own right. When life is hard, knowing that somebody is there can be a lifeline.

When I met Simon I was in a dark place. He got the brunt of my frustration at first. I was fed up being passed from pillar to post. But then I realised he was actually listening. It's not that he agrees with everything I say. He just seems to hear and understand more and has helped me to think about my life from a different angle

Johanna, carer, 58, recovering from depression following the death of her disabled son

Active listening is an under-rated skill which requires an open mind, concentration and resisting the natural tendency to always jump in and 'fix' people. There are times when an instant response to a crisis is necessary. But more often, facilitating conversations which allow people to reflect on their situation and possible ways forward can build confidence, restore identity and improve wellbeing. Our system needs to recognise this more.

Types of outcomes

In broad terms, what matters to people tends to be similar across age groups and through the course of life

Research shows that outcomes tend to relate to maintaining or improving wellbeing, which broadens the focus of conversations with people

Research also confirms that wellbeing significantly improves through people being listened to and having their perspectives attended to



What does a personal outcomes approach mean?

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A personal outcomes approach means that organisations focus on what matters to people and their families. This may sound simple. But too often our system tends to focus on what is important to services, especially when it comes to measuring and reporting information. A personal outcomes approach involves finding out what matters to people, writing that down and linking it up to project, service, organisational or national outcomes, instead of targets limiting what staff focus on in their conversations with people. If staff are under too much pressure to gather data for systems purposes this can lead to ‘filtering’ of the conversation and potentially missing the point

What I like about this way of working is that we are engaging with people about what is important to them, instead of processing them through the system.

Eileen, 37, social worker

Personal outcomes in practice

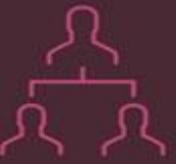


Just as practitioners working in different care settings have distinct roles, the amount of time they might have to work with people will vary as well as the duration of their involvement

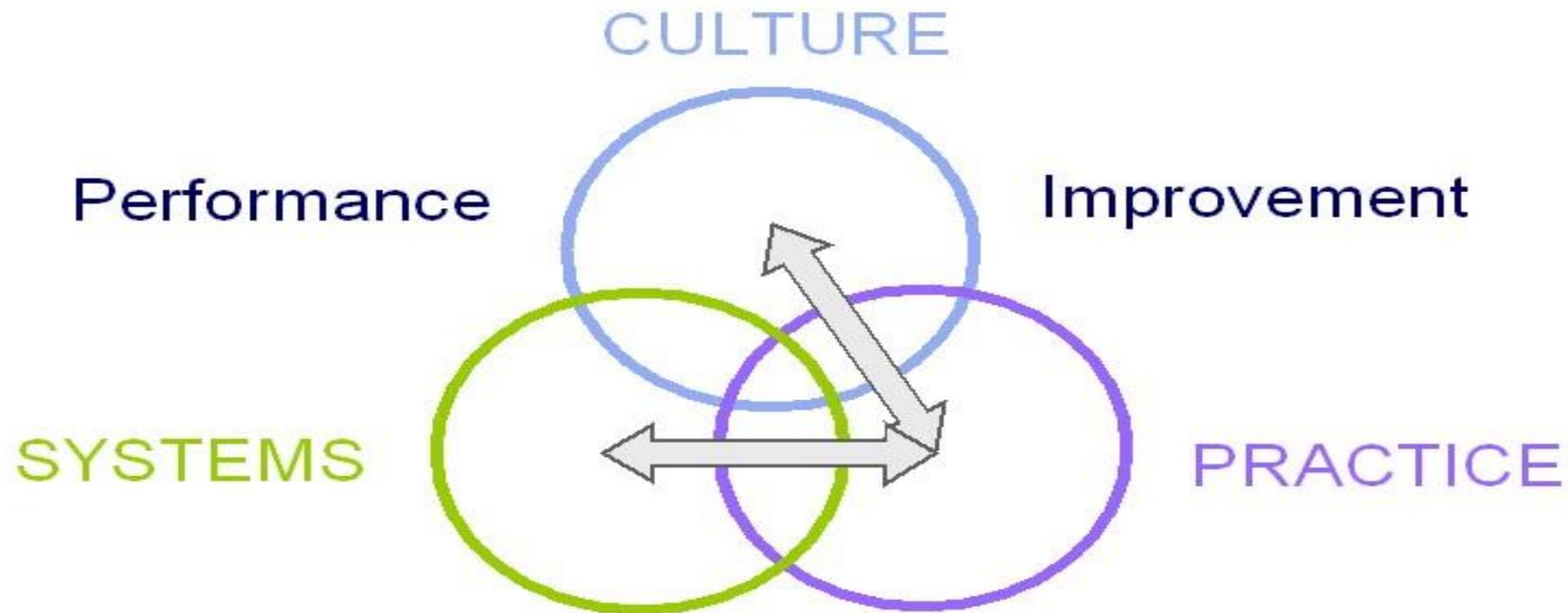
Whether you are involved with people in the long or short term, and whether or not you contribute to personal plans for people the meaning of a personal outcomes approach remains the same and the focus on outcomes provides a common language which can be shared by everyone

This involves building on good practice as described later but also requires leadership which supports person centred and outcomes focused approaches as described next

Embedding outcomes as a whole system approach

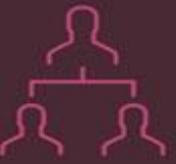


Embedding outcomes in organisations involves more than just staff training. Systems including finance and IT need to support outcomes. The culture of the organisation, shaped by leadership, also has a big role to play



There is a need to be clear about the purpose of information use. If data is mainly gathered for 'proving' against fixed performance indicators, this can limit the potential to feed back information to improve services

What difference does it make?



	Service Led	Outcomes focused
Endpoint	Delivery of service	Collaborative working towards outcomes based on a shared sense of purpose
Format	Pre-determined Q and A	Semi-structured conversation – open questions
Approach	Obtaining information required for form filling	Skilled interaction including active listening and reflecting back
Person	Client, service user or patient who receives services	Person in their own right with skills, ability and a role to play in working towards their outcomes
Practitioner	Expert	Does have expertise but is an enabler and partner
Focus	Identify deficits and match to a limited range of services	Build on capacities and strengths towards creative solutions

Engagement



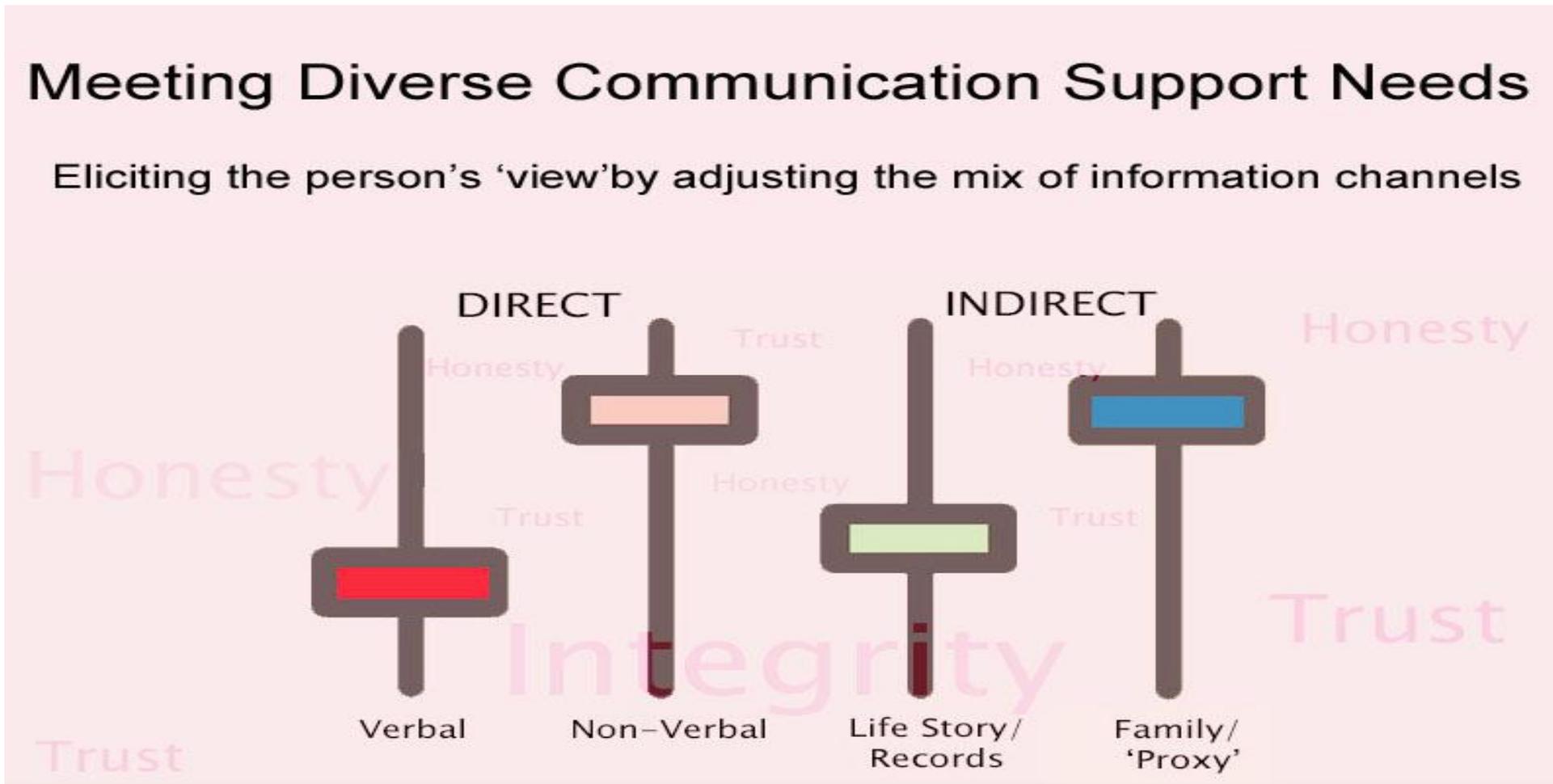
The Exchange Model has been identified as particularly help in illustrating this approach, developed by Smale and Tucson (1993) recently adapted by Miller and Barrie (2016). The model shows that there is often a need to engage with different perspectives to achieve a shared sense of purpose (outcomes)



Engagement



Engaging with people about their outcomes involves conversation in the broadest sense, to include non-verbal communication and other sources of information where the person is unable to verbalise. The diagram below refers to residents because developed with care home staff, but applies to most people to some extent





Most practitioners need to record something about the work they do. This can vary from brief notes to support plans to case recording. What matters to the person is often left out because of the need to record all tasks and performance data. Recording personal outcomes can be brief but can inform how everyone involved interacts with the person.

At a minimum this involves noting:

- What matters to the person in life and why these things are important (outcomes)
- Even without knowing the full picture, it is still possible to contribute to outcomes

In developing support plans this involves also noting:

- How to work towards the outcomes
- Who will be involved, when and where

At a later stage the plan should be reviewed to consider:

- the extent to which outcomes are being achieved (including unintended outcomes), what helps and hinders and whether the plan needs to change



Recording is a critical link in a personal outcomes approach

Recording what matters to the person is the bridge between the conversations about what matters and the actions taken. The information can be recorded:

- ‘Quantitatively’ using measures or scales that track outcomes over time
- ‘Qualitatively’ in a proportionate way and in a language meaningful to the person – the personal outcomes story

Core criteria for outcomes recording include being personalised, capturing the contribution of the person, family and other supporters as well as services and using the person’s language where appropriate





Outcomes information can be used to inform decisions made at the individual person level

- Recording what matters to the person/family in jargon free language supports a shared understanding of purpose
- This informs actions to be taken by the person and family members, as well as practitioners
- What is written down in support plans and care records is often read by others. It influences the way in which the person is understood by those working to support the person and can also shape self-understandings



Outcomes information can be used for more collective forms of decision making and organisational learning including

- Supporting practice developments
- Service delivery and improvement
- Planning and commissioning
- Enriching performance monitoring

More information is available on the Personal Outcomes Collaboration website

<https://personaloutcomescollaboration.org/recording-outcomes/>



Sources of content for this card:

Cook, A. and Miller, E. (2012) [Talking Points Personal Outcomes Approach Practical Guide](#)

Miller, E. and Barrie, K. (2015) [Learning from the Meaningful and Measurable Project](#)

Personal Outcomes Network (2016) [Values and Principles Underpinning a Personal Outcomes Approach](#)

Further information

<http://personaloutcomescollaboration.org/>

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