

# Outcomes

## What is it?

An outcome is an articulated expression of well-being of a population in a place which provides all agencies with the opportunity to contribute to that outcome with their individual programmes.

## Why is focussing on outcomes important?

- It encourages all involved to constantly examine what they do with the intent of answering one question: what do we want for children?
- Thinking about outcomes can maintain energy and induce action;
- It can lead to a more collaborative atmosphere between and within organisations;
- It can lead to sharing of resources;
- It can lead to better service delivery for children and families.

## What difficulties are there in having an outcomes approach?

- Pressure to come up with some outcome - outcomes should emerge from discussion and analysis;
- Possibility of identifying too many outcomes - take on what is realistically challenging;
- Linked to above, the need for realism in what your planning group can feasibly do with the resources available to you;
- The potential of some organisations involved to use the integrated planning process as a way to shift blame;
- Outcomes-focussed work can require organisational change and bureaucratic shift.

## Examples of Outcomes for Children and Young People

- Preparedness for school
- Safety at play in the neighbourhood
- Good mental health

## What do you need to do - a checklist:

- Is your organisation committed to working with others in ensuring better outcomes?
- Has your group engaged in a process resulting in a shared understanding of what is desirable? For example, outcomes reflect well-being - but for your group what constitutes the well-being of children and young people?
- Have you consulted staff in your own organisation regarding the outcomes?
- Has your planning group identified a lead person to maintain focus and energy in the process?
- Have you set aside resources - time in particular - to engage staff in how they can respond/change work patterns towards achieving outcomes for children?

## Task:

In your group, try to develop 3 outcomes for children and young people which could be realistically achieved. What difficulties did you encounter? How did you overcome them, or what do you need to overcome them?

# Indicators

## What is it?

Indicators are measures which permit organisations to ascertain the degree to which identified outcomes are being achieved; they provide information on the status of a situation or event with a view to improving the situation.

## Why are Indicators important?

- They allow organisations to monitor the effects of interventions in achieving identified outcomes;
- They permit the measuring of service outputs with a view to improving future service delivery for children and young people;
- Using indicators ensures an action-focused process.

## What difficulties are there in utilising indicators?

- The need to balance the desire to be all-knowing with the requirement of having a manageable set of indicators;
- The fear of attempting to develop new indicators and instead merely developing outcomes which fit existing sets of indicators;
- Measuring the indicators for the outcomes - instead of trying to measure everything;
- Losing perspective and getting bogged-down in formulating abstract indicators instead of concentrating on the broader goal -improving outcomes for children.

## What do you need to do - a checklist:

- Have you confirmed your shared vision on outcomes for children?
- Has your group committed time, staff and resources to develop new indicators to suit the desired outcome?
- Have you reflected on what constitutes the outcomes you are trying to achieve - what constitutes child safety for example?
- Have you identified key actors essential to sharing and pooling information resources so as to develop the most appropriate indicators possible?
- Have you thought about developing a system to formalise such relationships?
- Have you thought about what you will do if things are not going as planned?

## Examples of Indicators related to a particular outcome

### Outcome: Healthy Infants

#### Indicators:

- Health at Birth (infant mortality and birth weight statistics)
- Immunisation (vaccination rate)
- Health behaviour (Brush their teeth more than once a day, eat fruit once a day, breakfast every day)

## Task:

Reflect back on the outcomes you and your group identified in the previous task. Now think about how you would go about measuring them. Try and identify indicators already in existence which may aid you in this task. Are there any indicators you may need to develop yourself?

# Integrated planning

## What is it?

Integrated planning is the formulation of plans by and between agencies for the provision of services.

## Why is it important?

Integrated planning, and the resulting integrated provision of services, has in itself led to new and innovative work practices in achieving outcomes for children.

- Resources can be more effectively used;
- Inefficient and ineffective services in the locale are easily identified;
- Both fragmentation and overlap of services can be identified and reduced, if not totally removed;
- Where stigma of using services exists, it can be reduced as focus can be taken off this service.

## What difficulties are there in achieving Integrated planning?

- Failure by participants to understand fully what integrated planning and partnership means;
- Unrealistic aims can devalue the process;
- Frequent staff turnover;
- Lack of qualified staff;
- Inflexible professional ideologies;
- Location of the service (isolated);
- National objectives which do not support integrated planning. Statutory agencies can be driven in opposite directions by their lead departments in government and their colleagues close to the ground;
- Real and perceived power and resource differentials between agencies.

## Examples of Integrated Planning

- Define common outcomes
- Working together to prioritize actions
- Consensus decision making

## What needs to be in place for it to happen - a checklist:

1. Are your agency representatives mandated and empowered to act on behalf of colleagues and their whole agency on decision making?
2. Do your agency representatives have familiarity, both with the context and with other actors around the table?
3. Have procedures been put in place to allow for effective information sharing?
4. Is everyone clear on their role?
5. Are supports in place - financial, training, research - so as to reflect on the process and its impact on outcomes?
6. Does the group have a strong leader and a steering committee empowered with responsibility to drive the process?

## Task:

Think about a time when you planned together with another organization or agency. Did you have any problems? What kind of procedures could have made this process more effective?

# Integrated Commissioning

## What is it?

Integrated commissioning is about moving the plan towards identifying services and service providers to achieve outcomes. It involves two or more agencies taking joint responsibility for translating strategy into action.

## Why is it important?

Integrated commissioning is important for a number of reasons:

- It enables those involved to focus on needs, gaps and overlaps in service provision;
- Extending from integrated planning, it creates space to develop new responses to service user needs;
- It helps to clarify roles of different agencies, and minimize arguments about responsibilities;
- It helps to ensure greater efficiencies in pooling resources;
- It can promote value for money.

## What are the difficulties in engaging in Integrated Commissioning?

- Acknowledging that agencies involved may have fundamental differences in the internal planning processes or different agendas;
- Integrated planning can require organizations to reform, in turn causing turbulence which can weaken support for the process of commissioning;
- Stereotypes – negative stereotyping of professions in particular can impede working together.

## What needs to be in place for successful integrated commissioning to happen -

### Check-list:

- Is it based on the outcomes identified in the integrated planning process?
- Similar to integrated planning, do you have strategic commitment, clarity, support, good communications, trust and respect?
- Do you have formal policies and procedures relating to roles, responsibilities and expectations to govern the commissioning process?
- Have attempts been made to agree a common timetable?
- Have objectives been formulated on timely and accurate information?
- Is there stability in funding?

## Examples of Integrated Commissioning process

- Prioritising need inline with individual and integrated objectives
- Pooling Resources
- Putting plan into action

## Task:

Think back on your planning process and the outcomes & indicators you identified. Outline the next steps to translate this plan into action.

# Participation

## What is it?

A two-way communication process where continuous dialogue between children, young people, their families and the community is a primary feature of the policy process.

## Why is it important?

- It increases the ownership of policy which can impact upon levels of usage;
- It can enhance the resilience of children and young people, families and the wider community;
- It can result in more focused delivery of services;
- It gives children and young people, their families and members of the community a voice.

## What difficulties are there in enhancing participation?

- Resourcing organisations to develop and maintain participative structures can be challenging;
- Overcoming the tendency for only certain types of children to become involved and participate;
- Hearing, not just listening, to what children and young people have to say.
- Providing feedback to children and young people in a manner meaningful to them;
- Developing methods of communications which will engage children and young people, their families and their communities.

## What do you need to do

### - a checklist:

- Do you have a rationale for why your planning group want children (and / or their families, other members of the community) involved?
- How prepared is your planning group for the involvement of children and young people?
- Have you informed your staff in your own organisation?
- Have you set aside resources - time, personnel, and finance?
- Have you developed methods of participation to incorporate marginalised groups?
- Have you thought about what you will do if effective participation is not happening?

## Task:

Your group has been tasked with developing mechanisms to enhance the participation of children and young people and provide feedback to them. Set out different ways in which children and young people could be engaged. Identify the positives and negatives involved in each method.