Outcomes Star™

My Star™

The Outcomes Star for children and young people

> People really open up and sometimes it leads to whole new conversations

> Service users really enjoyed the interaction – and there were statistical results!

> I could feed back to my head office some really impressive results

> It has made the support plans more imaginative and more individual

> The Outcomes Star is an invaluable tool for our sector

> Support is more systematic and structured

> have to lved, even nce is mes needed

> We have incorporated it into assessment and three monthly reviews

> It helps identify training needs for staff and volunteers

> able ool for ts in cess

> We can now assist clients better - we love the Star!

> Some people can't understand written reports, but can understand this

> The Star is collaborative, rather than something that is done to people

> It enables a clear direction for collaborating with a client

> A holistic approach and direction to the support

> The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and in some cases life changing

Developed by Sara Burns, Joy MacKeith and Kate Graham of Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise

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

Licences are also available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages.

The Outcomes Star™
This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. 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, both as a founding partner of Triangle and as co-author of the original Outcomes Star (now called the Outcomes Star for Homelessness).

We would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to this version of the Star:

- Family Action
- Growing Our Strengths programme, involving Action for Children, Eclypse, Counselling and Support for Young People, Kindred Carers, Children's Links, Women's Work, Preston United, Stonham Housing, Seasons, Safe and Sound Derby and practical support from Emma Healey
- Salvation Army Westcare, Melbourne, Australia
- Coram
- Westminster City Council Children's services
- Nick Karr and Jasna Tesevic, Outcomes Star Australia.

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Contents

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Introduction

Introduction to My Star™

My Star is a version of the Outcomes Star, a suite of tools for supporting and measuring change when working directly with people.

The Star is an outcomes tool that enables organisations to measure and summarise change made by a range of people with different needs. It is also a keywork and coaching tool that can help people make changes by providing them with a clear picture of the journey they need to take, enabling them to take manageable steps and plotting their progress along the way.

The original version of the Outcomes Star was developed for the homelessness sector, and tailored versions are now available for a wide range of client groups including parents, people with learning disabilities and women experiencing domestic abuse. For further information please visit the Outcomes Star website – **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

My Star has been developed for use with children and young people[1] in a wide range of settings. The intention was to design a version of the Outcomes Star that is child-centred rather than context-specific. My Star is useful for working with children in vulnerable families, children in out-of-home care[2], and those with foster carers. My Star can also move with a child between different settings and can be used alongside the Family Star, where services and workers[3] interact directly with both children and parents.

My Star covers eight key areas:

1. Physical health

2. Where you live

3. Being safe

4. Relationships

5. Feelings and behaviour

6. Friends

7. Confidence and self-esteem

8. Education and learning.

Each of the eight scales follows either:

1. A Journey of Change, for those areas where change depends mostly on the child learning new skills or doing things differently

2. A severity scale, for those aspects of life where it is most important to know how difficult or otherwise things are for the child, and where improvement depends on a change in the child's circumstances.

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1   We use the term 'child' for brevity throughout this document as the guidance is for workers only, but this should be understood to include both children and young people, with a recommended, but not exclusive age range of 7-14.

2   The term for children in care in the UK is 'looked-after children' but throughout this document we will use the Australian term 'children in out-of-home care'.

3   We use the term 'worker' in this document to refer to the service staff, counsellors, mentors and others using My Star with a child or young person and also to ensure the terminology is broad enough to accommodate projects run by services with parents or other adults in their local community.

1. The Journey of Change:

Four of the eight scales in My Star follow a journey the child is making partly through their own efforts and partly as a result of the work of other people. Support is critical all through this journey, but it is the child's response to the support that enables them to make progress. This is more important than the environment around them changing. The journey has five stages:

1. At the red stage the child is **stuck** and their well-being is at risk. They may be acting out, withdrawn, confused. They may not know what to do or how they are feeling. The key point at this stage is that no one is offering support or support is on offer but the child won't accept it. Perhaps they don't see a problem, or it might all be too big to cope with. Perhaps the help being offered is not the right sort of help, or they don't like or trust the people offering it. Whatever the reason, things are **stuck**.

2. The first step forward happens when the child starts **accepting help**. This is the orange stage and means someone is helping them talk about what is going on and what support they need. If they need urgent help, it is being provided, even if there isn't much visible change yet. The child may be glad of support or may not want it, but will go along with it – perhaps because things have become so difficult that there is no other option open to them. They may feel anxious and upset about the situation, or lack confidence that there can be a positive future, but now they are not facing it alone.

3. The yellow stage is when the child and perhaps others are **trying** new ways of doing things. These are often difficult and lots of things the child tries may not work. However, they are working with someone to find ways to make life better and easier. Other people may be making things better as well, but it is the child's efforts that count.

4. At the green step the child is **finding what works**. They are discovering strategies that work for them and making some real changes in how they feel about themselves and relate to other people. Someone starting their journey at this stage still needs support from a service or at home to maintain behaviours and feelings.

5. The blue stage is when the child is **resilient**. They are coping with whatever turns up and are able to express their feelings in a way that is appropriate to their age. When things go wrong they can bounce back and find the support they need to make themselves feel better. This isn't the end of the child's journey, but you can be confident that for now the child has what they need without additional specialist support.

Completing the children's Star supported building up a bond with the child before completing any work with them.

Family Support worker

2. Severity scales

The remaining four scales cover areas where it is important to describe the extent to which the environment is safe, supportive and nurturing for the child. The child still has some influence on how they progress along the scale – especially older children who take more responsibility for themselves – but the key change that will allow them to make progress is an improvement in the quality of their environment.

For these severity scales, the first two stages are similar to the Journey of Change. However, from 3 onwards, it is about the severity of the problems faced and how that lessens, as follows:

1. The red stage is when there are **big concerns** about the child's well-being. The child is at risk of significant harm, neglected or deeply unhappy, and no one is doing anything about it.

2. At orange, there is still cause for concern but **someone is helping** to change things for the child. A parent, carer or worker is aware of the situation and trying to address the most serious issues. The child may not feel that very much is changing, but may at least feel listened to.

3. At yellow, there are **no big concerns**. All the serious problems have now been addressed, but there are plenty of things that need to improve.

4. At the green stage, things are **mostly OK**. More often than not, the child feels things are working reasonably well and that others are helping to make this happen. Depending on the child's age they may also be taking steps to improve things themselves.

5. At the blue stage, **things are good**. The situation is satisfactory, the child feels happy and things are OK for them. This is mainly due to their parents' or carers' support and attention, but depending on the child's age this may be due to their own efforts as well.
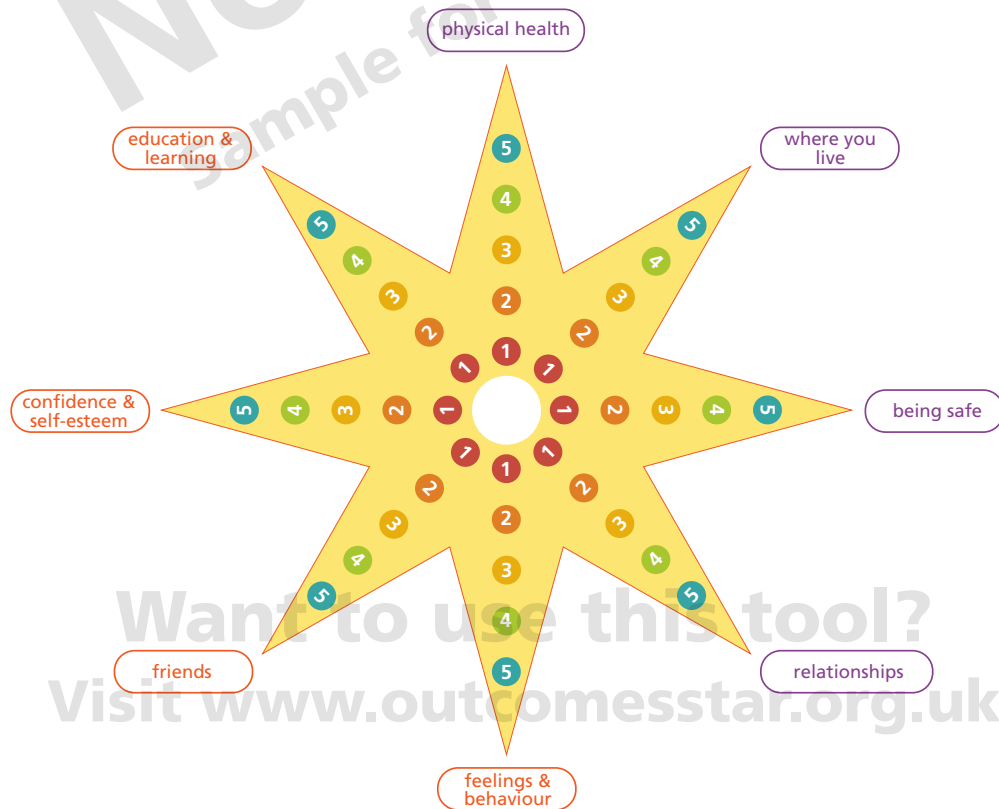

Figure 1: My Star

How it fits with other tools

The Family Star™

This is a version of the Outcomes Star developed by Triangle for use with parents and carers, either as a stand-alone tool or where My Star is being used with their children.

The table below shows the areas of My Star and how they fit with those of the Family Star, or the Family Star Plus[4].

My Star	Family Star
Physical health	Physical health Family routine
Where you live	Home and money
Being safe	Keeping your children safe
Relationships	Emotional well-being
Feelings and behaviour	Boundaries and behaviour
Friends	Social networks
Confidence and self-esteem	Emotional well-being (separated for children and parents in the Family Star Plus)
Education and learning	Education and learning

The Family Star is based on a ten-stage Journey of Change, so a 5 on My Star will be equivalent to a 10 on the Family Star. To facilitate comparisons, the five steps in My Star and five stages in the Family Star are colour-coded using the same colours and similar names where possible, as follows:

My Star	Family Star
Stuck or **big concerns** (1)	**Stuck** (1 to 2)
Accepting help or **someone is helping** (2)	**Accepting help** (3 to 4)
Trying or **no big concerns** (3)	**Trying** (5 to 6)
Finding what works or **mostly OK** (4)	**Finding what works** (7 to 8)
Resilient or **things are good** (5)	**Effective parenting** (9 to 10)

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4 All references to the Family Star also refer to the Family Star Plus unless stated otherwise.

The CAF

My Star does not replace a risk assessment for children. In the UK, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form or e-CAF is widely used by local authorities and the services they commission. The CAF is completed for the needs and risks for each child and covers 18 areas. There is a substantial overlap between the areas in My Star and the developmental needs outcomes in the CAF. The Family Star and My Star also cover most of the CAF outcome areas in relation to parents and carers and can open discussion about most of the family and environmental factors

THE COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Family & social relationships

Emotional & behavioural development

Social presentation

Basic care

Ensuring safety

Emotional warmth

CHILD
Safeguarding and promoting welfare

DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

PARENTS & CARERS

Self-care skills

Education

Identity health

Stimulation

Guidance and boundaries

Stability

FAMILY & ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Community resources

Family's social integration

Income

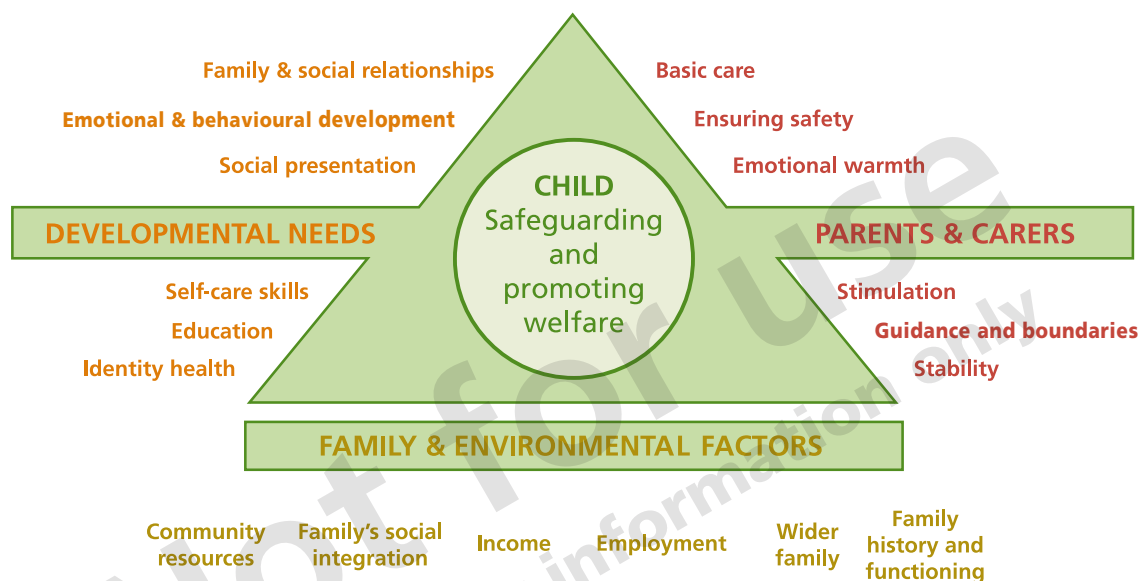Employment

Wider family

Family history and functioning

Figure 2: Common Assessment Framework developed by the Department for children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

There is information about how the Star can be used alongside the CAF in section four, part one of this Organisation Guide.

My Star™ resources

There is a range of resources available to help services use My Star effectively.

My Star™ Chart and Action Plan

The Star Chart and Action Plan is a four-page document including the Star Chart – on which the Star reading is marked – a space for notes, and a simple action plan for children. It is completed with children when using My Star as a paper-based system.

My Star™ User Guide

This is a guide for children to complete their Star with the worker, containing concise readable scales in a friendly format.

Illustrated Journey of Change – aliens or stickmen

There are two versions of this optional resource at the end of the User Guide, which summarises the five stages on the Journey of Change. Version one uses alien imagery, which may be more suitable for younger children. Version two uses stickmen imagery, which may be more suitable for teenagers and young people. These illustrated versions of the Journey of Change are recommended as an additional resource for all children and could be used instead of the scales with children who have difficulty with, or resistance to, reading.

Flash cards

These are simple cards with the name of each area on one side and a more detailed description on the other. Some children may want to create their own illustrations that have meaning for them.

The Star Online

My Star is available online via an intuitive web application called the Star Online. This application allows users to complete the Star with children on screen. It incorporates the scales and guidance for workers and children. Alternatively, the Star Online can be used in conjunction with paper versions of the Star. Workers and children can complete the Star on paper and then input the reading on the Star Online later.

The Star Online web application is secure and provides a wide range of features allowing organisations to analyse and report on the outcomes data that staff have added to the system, and to compare their outcomes with averages for similar services and client groups. It is available to organisations using My Star for an annual licence fee based on the number of workers using the Star.

For more information on My Star online, go to **www.staronline.org.uk**. You can sign up for an account or the 30-day free trial.

Training and consultancy

It is essential that workers receive training before using My Star and most organisations benefit from consultancy support with the implementation process. Triangle provides a range of consultancy support and in-house training courses, and runs a licensed trainer scheme for those wanting to cascade training within their service. For further details, please visit the Outcomes Star website – **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** – or email **training@triangleconsulting.co.uk**.

This Organisation Guide

The remainder of this introduction presents the theoretical foundations and development process of My Star.

Parts one and two thereafter support the implementation and use of My Star.

Part one is for those in a management role and provides guidance and good practice examples in implementing My Star across a project.

Part two presents guidance for workers using My Star with children or young people.

Outcomes Star™ website

The Outcomes Star website – **www.outcomesstar.org.uk** – contains information about all versions of the Star along with supporting information. Specific areas covered by the website include:

- How the Star was developed

- Research and validation on the Star

- What children and other people say about using the Star

- Good practice on implementation

- Use of Outcomes Star data for outcome measurement

- Use of the Star as a keywork tool

- Information for commissioners on using the Star.

Theoretical foundations

Values and assumptions underpinning the Outcomes Star™ and My Star™ in particular

New approach

The approach underpinning the Outcomes Star family of tools is, we believe, an original approach to assessment and outcomes measurement. It can be described as Participatory Assessment and Measurement because it draws on and extends Action Research and Participatory Action Research, both of which place empowerment, collaboration and integration at the core of research methods[5]. In the same way, My Star seeks to empower children and young people within a collaborative process of assessment and measurement that is integrated with support work, rather than being a separate activity.

Empowerment

Underpinning My Star is an understanding that, for children and young people, positive outcomes depend not only on their **external circumstances**, but also on the skills and attitudes they bring to the challenges they face – often referred to as **resilience**. For that reason, My Star both measures their external circumstances, and looks at how the child is responding to those circumstances. Measuring and supporting the development of resilience in children has been shown to be a key factor in enabling them to thrive, sometimes in spite of their circumstances. This is a more empowering frame of reference for keywork and measurement than approaches that only deal with circumstances that are often outside the child's control. My Star focuses the attention of the service provider and child on what they can do together to develop the motivation, beliefs and skills the child needs.

Those using versions of the Outcomes Star report that it provides a much more empowering context for their work where people are able to be active participants in the process rather than having assessment done to them. My Star involves children and young people in their own process of change – and in the validation of their experience and perceptions – which is often critical to helping them make the changes they seek[6]. Even for those not able to participate actively, because they are too young or have other needs, My Star is compatible with person-centred planning.

Collaboration

When using the Star, the worker and child assess the child's needs together. Children base their assessment on their knowledge and understanding of themselves, and workers utilise their experience of working with other children generally, and their observations and reflections on this child's behaviour in particular. The intention is that the assessment emerges through a dialogue between child and worker and this may include both participants shifting their views. In this regard, My Star is neither a child-only self-completion tool nor a worker-only completion tool – it is a collaborative tool. However, given the difference in power between the worker and the child, My Star differs from some adult Stars by giving priority to the child's views and by hearing and strengthening their voice through supportive – and where appropriate, challenging – dialogue and inquiry.

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5   O'Brien, R. (2001) "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research" in Roberto Richardson (ed.) Theory and Practice of Action Research, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraiba (English version)

6   Burns, S., MacKeith, J. and Graham, K. (2008) Using the Outcomes Star: Impact and Good Practice, London: Homeless Link

My Star makes the model of change explicit and the information that is collected – the Star reading – is immediately presented back to the child in the form of a completed Star. This makes it possible for the child and worker to take an overview together and reflect on the completed Star as a basis for deciding what action to take.

This contrasts with extractive approaches to assessment and measurement in which the worker, in the role of expert, collects data from the child and takes that data away to make an assessment on their own. The expert may then decide what course of action is most appropriate and try to persuade the child that this is the best way forward for them.

Integration

The process of completing My Star is an integral part of the journey, both for child and worker, and it is intended to support as well as measure change. Completing the Star, engaging with the model of change and reflecting on the data presented on the Star can, in and of itself, result in a change of attitude within the child. The process can have a similar impact on the child's worker. As a result, measurement is fully integrated into the keywork process, rather than being a separate activity which takes the worker away from their interaction with the child. In addition, discussions about where a child is on the Outcomes Star scales and Journey of Change naturally lead to thinking about next steps and action planning. This is why it is recommended that My Star is used as an integral part of coaching, mentoring or other support techniques.

This contrasts with traditional approaches where collection of data is seen as a separate process to intervention, and may be regarded as intrusive by workers and children.

How My Star™ was developed

My Star was developed in collaboration with the Growing Our Strengths Partnership, Family Action, Coram and Westminster City Council in the UK, and The Salvation Army Westcare in Australia. Growing Our Strengths was a partnership of Action for Children, Family Action, Action for Prisoner's Families and the Family and Parenting Institute, funded by the Department of Education to provide practical, tailored support to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations engaged in early intervention activity with children, young people and their families. Growing Our Strengths has supported the Voluntary and Community Sector to more confidently demonstrate its ability to provide positive outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

My Star was developed with staff working with vulnerable children and young people in a wide range of contexts – therapists working with children recovering from trauma and abuse, adoption and fostering services, young people affected by alcohol and substance misuse, residential services in Australia, family support and service based counsellors, and services providing

support for parents of children with physical and learning difficulties. It was piloted with a range of services run by The Salvation Army Westcare in Melbourne, Australia, Family Action, Action for Children, Coram, Eclypse, CASY (Counselling and Support for Young People), Kindred Carers, Children's Links, Dudley Young Carers, Seasons and Westminster City Council Children's services in the UK.

As with all versions of the Outcomes Star, the methodology was based on Action Research[7] and the Existential Phenomenological research method[8]. 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 being researched and the meaning of the experience for them.

The My Star development process consisted of three main stages:

1) Data gathering

An initial one-day workshop was held in London in February 2012, with a working group comprising managers and workers from services throughout Action for Children and Family Action, Women's Work, Preston United, Stonham Housing, Safe and Sound, Eclypse, Kindred Carers, CASY, and Children's Links. The workshop explored the following key questions that are common to all versions of the Outcomes Star:

- What are the main areas in which the projects are seeking to create change? *These areas become the points of the Star*

- What is the desired end point of the change process? *This becomes the end point on the model of change that underpins all the scales*

- What model of change describes the steps that children take on the journey towards that end point? *This is described in a series of steps showing a clearly discernible, qualitative difference between each step of the journey.*

A range of techniques were used to draw out participants' experience and knowledge including:

- Using an Outcome Triangle tool to identify the overall aim of services, the specific changes they are trying to bring about, and the activities the service carries out to achieve these changes

- Bringing to mind an individual child who has undergone a substantial change and identifying the key areas of change for that child

- Structured questioning exercises to draw out the steps, one by one, in each outcome area. The focus with this session is on concreteness, drawing out information about the signs of change in detail.

2) Data analysis and the development of the draft My Star™

Triangle compiled all the material gathered at the workshop and reviewed it to allow meaning and common strands to emerge. Material used by participating services was borne in mind, along with the Family Star and other versions of the Outcomes Star, but the raw data was allowed to speak for itself rather than organised according to existing models or frameworks. On the basis of this material, a draft version of My Star was developed.

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7 O'Brien, R. (2001) "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research" in Roberto Richardson (ed.) Theory and Practice of Action Research, Joao Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraiba (English version)

3) Consultation and piloting

Through an iterative process of sharing, listening, refining and sharing again, the outcome areas, the Journey of Change and descriptions of the steps towards change within each outcome area were refined until they resonated with the support workers and managers participating in the development process. This process had four main steps:

- A second workshop was held in June 2012. Here, the first draft of My Star was presented to workshop participants and feedback was gathered. In light of this feedback, improvements were made and a prototype version was developed for piloting

- Workers and children tested the My Star pilot for three months from October 2012 to December 2012, gathering feedback questionnaires and Star data for analysis by Triangle

- Final workshops took place in January 2013 in London, Lincoln, and Melbourne, where the results of the pilot were reviewed. Participants shared their experiences of using the Star, and the value and meaning of the data generated

- Further revisions were subsequently made to My Star. The final stage involved editing and designing to ensure that the tool was clear, accessible and user-friendly in advance of the first edition being published.

> It helps the worker to focus on the child rather than the referral issue, ensuring that they ask about all aspects of the child, not just the area referred to.
>
> **Manager, Action for Children service**

The pilot process and findings

The pilot version of My Star had ten scales, four of which were environmental, and six developmental. It was tested using several approaches in a wide range of contexts, including the following:

1. Action for Children Projects – Disability London, Dudley Young Carers, Seasons

2. Family Action – Greenwich/Thamesmead, Lincolnshire team, Bradford, Southend

3. Coram, Eclypse, CASY, Kindred Carers, Children's Links

4. Westminster City Council Children's services

5. The Salvation Army Westcare, Melbourne, Australia.

My Star was piloted with over 160 children of whom 137 completed two readings. Star data for the 137 children was analysed using a simple spreadsheet.

Pilot feedback on the process of completing the Star™

The key points fed back at the end of the pilot workshop about the experience of workers using the tool were:

- The conversation takes time, but the result is worth it. The Star captures the child's view and gives them a voice. It gathers quality information when compared to other tools and gives insights into children's thoughts and experiences

- Children found it non-invasive and non-threatening, and at the same time workers found that they could explore areas they hadn't previously been able to discuss with children. It was a great trigger for exploration

- Workers found that children were more honest about what was going on

- Where action planning was used for the first time, it made change quicker. Goals became more specific and it was easier to review progress

- There was a reasonable fit with the Family Star

- It could be used with a range of ages, though it was probably best between 7 and 14, and it could also be used with children with learning disabilities depending on the nature and severity of the issue and the nature of the service

- It was rather over-long to use, even over two sessions, and should have fewer scales.

Pilot data highlights

137 children completed the Star twice during the pilot period – 85 in the UK, and 52 in Australia. The UK pilot was largely concerned with children in vulnerable families and the Australian pilot with children in out-of-home care. The pilot data should be treated with caution as the pilot process revealed some issues with the Star itself, and increased clarity about where it was most suitably used. These have been addressed in the final published version. The highlights of the data were:

Overall change

In the UK, where the focus was mostly on children in vulnerable families:

- 53% (45) of children showed an increase in their overall Star reading, of which eight showed a substantial change – over one-point shift on the scale of 1 to 5

- 43% (37) of children showed no change in their overall reading and four showed a reduction

- The overall average reading increased from 3.9 to 4.3 during the pilot period.

In Australia, where the focus was mostly on children in out-of-home care:
- 52% (27) of children showed an increase in their overall Star reading, of which one showed a substantial change – over one-point shift on the scale of 1 to 5

- 36% (19) of children showed no change in their overall reading and six showed a reduction

- The overall mean reading increased from 3.9 to 4.3 during the pilot period.

The average starting point on the different scales on the Star varied between the ten Star areas. In both the UK and Australia, the initial readings were generally lower for the developmental scales – 3.1 to 3.9 – than the environmental scales – 3.8 to 4.0 in Australia and 4.0 to 4.3 in the UK. The lowest starting point in both pilots was 3.1 for Dealing with Feelings – revised to Feelings and Behaviour in the published version.

Areas of greatest and least change:

- The greatest change was in Dealing with Feelings, with an average increase of 0.7 in the UK and 0.5 in Australia, on a scale of 1 to 5. Among children and young people in the UK, 56% recorded an increase in this scale, while the figure in Australia was 50%. The greater change in the UK is likely to reflect the number of children in specific therapeutic interventions focused on dealing with strong feelings.

- The smallest change in the UK was recorded in relation to People who Care – revised to Relationships in the published version. 21% of children showed an improvement with an average increase of 0.2 on the scale. This probably reflects the relatively high starting point, with many children already at 5, so 72% showed no change.

- The smallest change in Australia was recorded in relation to Looking after Yourself, where 23% of children showed an improvement, with an average increase of 0.1 on the scale, and 69% of children showed no change. This scale was removed post-pilot because it was found not to be relevant to younger children. The areas covered were incorporated into Physical Health and Being Safe.

- Many children and young people in the pilot were placed on 4 or 5 in all areas. We would expect more realistic readings now that the scales have been revised, with more comprehensive training available, and greater clarity of the contexts where My Star is suitable for use.

> I liked seeing how well I had done.
>
> **Child participant**

> It was a really great way to get the child's perspective across within the CAF.
>
> **Manager, Dudley Young Carers service**

> It points out the child's overall well-being and highlights areas to work on.
>
> **Manager, Action for Children Young Carers service**

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Analysis of feedback forms from children and workers

Child feedback: Analysis of the 40 feedback forms completed by children from all sites showed that:

- 65% said that they had enjoyed doing it

- 92% said they had understood it

- 62% said that the shape helped them understand what is going well and where they need support

- 57% said that the Star showed the progress they had made.

Worker feedback: Analysis of feedback forms from 49 staff members is summarised in the table below. Workers were asked to agree or disagree with five statements about the process of using the Star with children.

	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Using the Star helped me to get an overall picture of children's strengths and needs	69%	16%	15%
The scale descriptions help me to understand where to focus next with the children I work with	64%	18%	18%
I found it encouraging to see the progress that children had made between Star readings	60%	18%	22%
I found the process of completing the Star with children too long	50%	21%	29%
The flashcards for the Star areas and the Journey of Change helped children to understand the Star	15%	35%	50%

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The overall conclusions from the pilot were:

- The focus of the Star is appropriate

- Generally children find the Star helpful and like completing it

- On the whole, workers like the Star and find it supports their discussions and work with children

- My Star showed change for some children, even during the relatively short pilot period, but is probably most useful when completed at longer intervals

- It isn't as appropriate for pre-school children, though it can be used with them

- It can be used with young people up to the age of 18

- It needed to be shorter and more appropriate for children in out-of-home care

As a result:

- The number of scales was reduced from ten to eight

- The name was changed from Children's Star to My Star

- Language and content were adjusted to ensure the Star was more appropriate for older children and adolescents, and to better reflect issues for those in out-of-home care

- The flash cards were simplified and the number reduced, doing away with picture flashcards for the Star areas as these did not pilot well.

It really captures the child's view.

Worker, Family Action

It has been really positive for the professionals, feeding back in-team around the child meetings. Sometimes it's not what parents wanted to hear but it really made them change. The child said that they are now being heard at home.

Manager, Action for Children Young Carers service

It helps me explain what I feel.

Child participant

Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk
or 020 7272 8765

Part one: Implementing My Star™ in your project

Implementing the Star effectively, and achieving the full benefits of using it, takes time, continuous attention, and a commitment to following the process through and addressing issues as they arise. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that the introduction of My Star is led from the top. Only in this way will the Star receive the profile and backing it requires for developments to be co-ordinated across a service. We also recommend nominating champions within projects and setting up an implementation group to oversee the introduction of the Star.

The rest of this section covers a checklist of eight steps for introducing the Star into your project. Many organisations find it helpful to have continuous support with planning and implementation, in addition to Triangle's essential training for workers and managers, and the Star Online web application. To discuss your needs and the option of a bespoke implementation package, please email Triangle at **info@triangleconsulting.co.uk**.

1 Review your reasons for introducing My Star™

There are a number of reasons why organisations decide to introduce My Star.

Internal reasons:

- They want to take an outcomes approach to their work in order to measure success for individual children, services and the organisation as a whole, and use this information to inform their service delivery

- They feel it will improve the support they provide to children.

External reasons:

- To demonstrate the value of the service to funders or commissioners

- Because a funder or commissioner requires that they use the Star as a condition of contract.

Triangle's experience and research indicates that implementation is smoother and satisfaction is higher when organisations are motivated primarily by internal reasons. Even if you are introducing the Star for external reasons, we recommend that you adopt it in the spirit of learning and service improvement and capitalise on the internal benefits too.

> My advice is to see the implementation of the Outcomes Star as a change management process. It is vital to communicate to keyworkers how it will help them to do their job and that it will help the organisation as a whole to make its case to the outside world. It is also vital to integrate the Star fully into keywork processes and training.
>
> **Manager at St Mungo's**
>
> Refers to the Outcomes Star for Homelessness

2 Check that My Star™ is suitable for you

Firstly, you will need to be confident that My Star is the right tool for your service. There are two key questions that will help you do this.

i) Do you provide one-to-one ongoing support for children or young people?

My Star is designed to be used in situations where a child and worker are engaged in a one-to-one support relationship over a period of time. We would suggest at least six weeks. It may also be possible to use it with children or young people in a group, provided there is also some one-to-one time. If you only see a child once or twice, for a short period of time, or have little or no one-to-one contact with them, it is probably not suitable for your service.

ii) Do you work holistically with children or young people?

My Star is holistic, covering all the key aspects of life, and is designed to help you and the children you work with assess the changes they are making in their attitudes, behaviour and skills across all these areas. If your service focuses on one or two areas, for example specific learning difficulties or some therapeutic interventions, the Star will not be suitable. However, it should work well if you are aiming to support children in most, but not all, of the Star areas. If your service focuses on areas that are not in My Star, you can assess a child's progress towards these goals in another way alongside the Star.

If you have answered yes to these two questions, it is likely that My Star will be appropriate for your service. If not, you may wish to contact Triangle to discuss how to proceed. For example, where a service provides mainly respite care for families with disabled children, the Carer's Star may be a better fit, and there are versions for young people in a range of community-based services. If there is currently no version that fits your service adequately, please contact Triangle to enquire about the latest versions in development, or the possibility of working with us to create a new version to meet your needs.

Organisations are not permitted to make changes to the Star under the terms of copyright for the tool. For more information, please refer to the copyright statement on page two of this guide or the Outcomes Star website **www.outcomesstar.org.uk**.

Steps three, four and five below should be considered at the same time.

3 Run a pilot – try it out

Some workers may be resistant to the introduction of the Star, with understandable concerns about finding the time or introducing an additional tool or measurement. This was certainly the case at the start of the pilot. It may be advisable to pilot the Outcomes Star before rolling it out across your organisation. The benefits of running a pilot are:

- It enables you to test how the tool works for you in practice

- It helps you to answer the practical questions set out under point four below about how to integrate the Star into your ways of working prior to full implementation

- If it goes well, it creates a demonstration project and staff with experience of using the Star who can reassure, motivate and train others

- If there are problems, these can be addressed before the Star is rolled out across the organisation.