

# Using the Pathway Star™

The Pathway Star is designed for use with people who need support to move towards employment. This includes people currently facing significant barriers to work, such as health or housing problems, substance misuse, crime, domestic abuse, family culture (including generations not in work) or household finances. It is likely to be most useful for services supporting people as they start to make changes, such as leaving the house more, up to the stage when they can engage in mainstream employment services where that is a realistic option, or when they have found alternatives to work if it is not realistic for them.

The Pathway Star resources consist of:

- The Pathway Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan for use with service users
- The Pathway Star short illustrated Scales for use with service users
- The Pathway Star Flashcards for use with service users
- The Pathway Star User Guide, with both brief visual scales and detailed scale descriptions. This is mainly a resource for workers but can be shared with service users to support discussion
- A web application for online completion and analysis at [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk)
- This Guidance for Workers.

I have now got an idea how to change my life.

**Service user**

It is a useful tool for gathering an overall view of the customer and the barriers that they are facing, as part of the action plan process. I include customers, and this allows us both to come up with SMART and relevant action plans.

**Worker (Employment advocate)**

The Pathway Star was developed by Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise in collaboration with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The process involved workers, managers and service users.

Completing the Pathway Star is intended to be a helpful, engaging and empowering process that stimulates and focuses discussion and provides a useful, shared basis for an action or support plan. It is a flexible tool that relies on the skills of the workers using it, as well as on a degree of understanding and trust between worker and the person they support. The Star is designed to be used one to one; the aim is to have a genuine interaction and complete it collaboratively. Before using the Pathway Star, all workers need training from Triangle or a licensed trainer.

Background and further information about the Outcomes Star suite of tools can be found at [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk).

Want to use this Star?  
Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
or 020 7272 8765

## Before you use the Pathway Star™

**Make sure that you have received training in using the Pathway Star** so that you are familiar with the materials and know when and how it is used in your service. It is vital that you understand and use the Journey of Change underlying the scales: **not yet ready, talking about it, giving it a go, keeping going** and **managing OK**. This will ensure consistent and reliable information as a basis for support planning and for use by your service. You also need to be familiar with all the scale descriptions, so you can unpack and rephrase them as needed.

## How to introduce the Pathway Star™

Before you introduce the Star to someone for the first time:

- Devise a short script to introduce the Star in a way that feels natural to you and clear for those you are working with
- If you meet with the people you support in groups, it can be useful and save time to explain the Star to the group before starting one-to-one work within individual sessions
- Consider giving people who are interested a copy of the short illustrated Scales or even the User Guide to read before the session. Although the User Guide is quite detailed and relies on someone being comfortable with reading, the whole document is worded in accessible language, so it can be shared.

When introducing the Star:

- Explain that people may start anywhere on the journey, can move both up and down on the scale and that 5 is the top of the Star scales but not the end of the journey
- Be really clear that this is about establishing where they are and building up a map of their world, experiences and journey – it is not about being judged or being awarded an overall “score”. It is best to avoid the word “score” completely
- Let the person decide which scale to start with or choose one that is concrete and may be easier to discuss, such “Skills” or “Healthy Lifestyle”
- Consider using the flashcards to help illustrate what is covered by each area of the Star and the stages of the Journey of Change.

Some suggested phrases for introducing the Star include:

*“The Pathway Star is a way of tracking your journey and finding out about your strengths and the areas where you need more information or support – there are no right or wrong answers.”*

*“The Star tells us where you are now and what needs to happen next, and it helps you and me plan our work together.”*

*“This is about hearing your voice and what you think about what’s going on for you now, so that together we can work out what support you need.”*

**Want to use this Star?**  
**Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)**

**Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)**  
**or 020 7272 8765**

## How to complete the Pathway Star™

**Complete the Star collaboratively** with the people you support in a way that responds to their needs and abilities. The aim is to engage them in meaningful discussion, and to listen and learn about them, rather than to complete the Star as quickly as possible. The worker's role includes helping people gain insight into what is going on for them and what might help. This needs to be done in a skilful and supportive way, preferably using open questions, listening and feeding back to check understanding.

**Use the scale descriptors as a basis for discussion** about the chosen area or have an open discussion about the area and then use the scale to place the service user on the Journey of Change. The illustrated short Scales, the Flashcards and the brief visual scales in the User Guide are designed to be used directly with people. Although the detailed scales are intended primarily as a resource for workers, they are written to be accessible, so feel free to refer to specific points for clarification when completing the Star with people. Avoid reading them out in their entirety because of their length.

**Always use the scales** – these are designed to reduce subjectivity, otherwise one person's 2 could be another person's 4 and the completed Star won't be a useful basis for completing the action plan and your service won't be able to treat collated Star data as reliable for reporting purposes.

**If you don't agree, have a discussion** – this can help you learn about people you support and help them reflect on their situation and see it in new ways. Encourage people with low confidence to see their strengths. If someone is able to engage meaningfully and is at 3 or above for most of the Pathway Star areas, encourage them to take the lead in placing themselves on the scales. You may need to be more directive for those in the **talking about it** stage. People who are in the **not yet ready** stage in all or most areas will not discuss the Star meaningfully and you may need to do a worker-only reading.

If there is a lot of discussion, **consider completing the Star over two or more visits** rather than one, though preferably close together.

**If you can't reach agreement, record both views on the Star**, labelling which is your opinion, and which is the opinion of the person you are supporting, using the Star Notes to record points from your discussion. Use your professional judgement to decide when further discussion is not helpful.

**Recognise external factors.** While the Journey of Change focuses on people receiving support and the changes for them, there may be societal factors or other conditions beyond their control – and beyond the control of your service – which make it harder for things to improve. These may include poor housing, financial difficulty or lack of suitable mental health provision or any other services they need. These also need to be acknowledged and recorded when using the Star. Your service may then be able to use this information to identify gaps in provision, plan future developments or raise issues with policy-makers.

It gives a good overview of what is happening in a client's life and can help them prioritise. It opens up discussion and can help set goals.

**Worker (Employment advocate)**

**When you have completed all of the scales, join the points to create a shape.** Mark each point on the Star Chart and join the points. Encourage people to do this and to create the shape themselves. This applies whether you and they are completing the Star on paper or on screen or using the Star Online.

## How to use the completed Star as the basis for a support plan

Look at the shape of the completed Star together and prompt people to reflect on it as a basis for what to do next. Ask questions such as:

- Is the shape of the Star an accurate picture of how things are for you now?
- What does it tell you about what is and is not going well?
- What are the strengths that you bring to the areas that are going well? How might you apply those strengths in other areas?
- What is it most important to address first?

Once you have chosen the areas to be included in the support plan, further motivational questions for each area include:

- Where on the journey do you want to get to and by when?
- What needs to be done to bring about this change?
- Who is responsible for these actions? When can they be completed?

**Complete the Pathway Star Action Plan** or use your service's support planning documentation. The Journey of Change provides valuable pointers for thinking about the goals of support with people as well as achievable, realistic actions, as summarised on the next page:

The Pathway Star made everything easier to understand - made things less jumbled. It was easy to get goals.

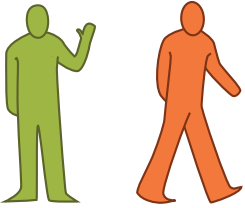
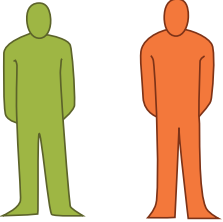
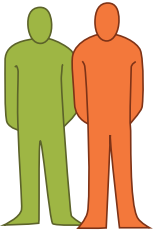
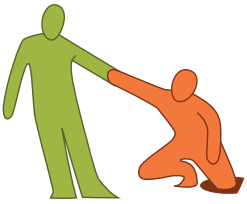
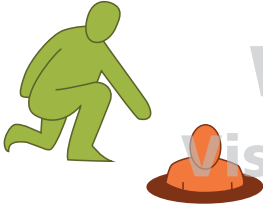
Service user

The Star helped me to see visually where I was up to in my life.

Service user

**Want to use this Star?**  
**Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)**

**Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)**  
**or 020 7272 8765**

Journey of Change stage	Goals and approaches with support
<p><b>Managing OK (5)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, people are actively making progress towards a working future and able to do so without extra support from a specialist service. The main actions will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping them to reflect on how they have managed to overcome barriers and how they can learn from this</li> <li>• Celebrating their achievements</li> <li>• Building and reinforcing support networks outside of the service</li> <li>• Ensuring service users know how to seek help again if needed in the future.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keeping going (4)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, people are likely to have found something they are willing to keep going with, and have more resilience, but it is still early days and they will need lots of support to address specific barriers that prevent them making progress. The focus of support may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping them to identify what is working and to make changes where approaches are not working</li> <li>• Supporting them to deal with manageable issues themselves and offering more support through setbacks or more difficult areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Giving it a go (3)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, people believe things could be different and may begin to see the possibility of a working future for themselves. They are open to suggestions and willing to give things a go but will find it hard to keep going, so goals and actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering sufficient support and encouragement</li> <li>• Helping them to think about how to tackle barriers</li> <li>• Helping them to keep trying new possibilities and to find out about courses or options – they will probably need to try several things to find something suitable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Talking about it (2)</b></p> 	<p>People at this stage are starting to engage in a meaningful way with workers but do not take the initiative or believe change is possible. The approach may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging them to consider options and identify manageable first steps</li> <li>• Setting up appointments and perhaps accompanying them</li> <li>• Improving their situation by giving practical support</li> <li>• Building on any signs of greater confidence and initiative.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Not yet ready (1)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, there are substantial difficulties and/or barriers to work, training or volunteering, but people do not yet engage with workers or accept help in a way that is meaningful and helps them move on. Actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing practical and proactive help, and preventing or minimising harm if someone is at risk in any way</li> <li>• Identifying barriers to work, training or volunteering</li> <li>• Providing any relevant information, including explaining any consequences of not making changes or engaging with support</li> <li>• Developing trust and starting to build a relationship.</li> </ul>

Want to use this Star?  
 Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)  
 Contact [info@triangleconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@triangleconsulting.co.uk)  
 or 020 7272 8765