How do we know if children’s social care services make a difference?
Development of an outcomes framework

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#CSCoutcomes
The study

• Development of an outcomes framework for CSCS: to provide better evidence for those planning and delivering the service
• It is designed to complement, not replace, existing data collection
• Developed using a bottom-up approach, based on consultations with local authority staff and children/ families as well as existing evidence
• If it proves useful, it could be the first step towards a more cohesive approach to understanding how to improve children’s outcomes
• A big THANK YOU to the
  • Nuffield Foundation for funding us
  • The advisory group for challenging and supporting us all the way
  • The children, parents and carers who told us what mattered to them
  • The case study local authorities who gave up their time to speak to us
  • All those who commented on the emerging findings
Developing an outcomes framework

• **User outcomes:** what changes for users are expected from services?

• **Intermediate outcomes:** how can these changes be achieved?
How CSCS can make a difference

Socio-economic and cultural context

Leaders create the conditions and culture that support good social work practice

Corporate commitment and support for CSCS

CSCS reach children and families who need support and offer them the level of support they are entitled to

Relationship based practice that values children and families and involves them in identifying the support they need

Role of other agencies

Children in need:
- Are safe where they live
- Are supported to be healthy and happy
- Are supported to enjoy and progress in education

Learning from the experiences of staff, children and families
Four types of data to measure intermediate and child outcomes

- Data about the organisation, workforce and practice
- ‘Snapshot’ and trend data on cohort of service users
- Data on users’ views and experience of services and self-reported impacts
- Data on progress of individual children re: safety, wellbeing, healthy development and education
Intermediate outcomes
The ‘right’ conditions and culture

- Effective leadership
- Commitment to SW values and ethics
- Culture that supports reflective learning
- Effective multi-agency working
- Adequate support infrastructure
- Shared understanding of good practice
- Stable workforce at all levels
- Motivated workforce
- Workforce with the right skills
Services reach children and families who need help

- Partner agencies are able to identify children who are potentially in need.
- Effective identification of children in need.
- Effective identification of children at risk of harm.
- Effective identification of children who cannot be cared for safely at home.
- Level of support is appropriate to meet a child’s needs.
- Care leavers remain in contact and continue to receive support.
Children and families are valued and involved

- Children trust staff and have a stable and supportive relationship with them
- Parents/carers trust staff and have a stable and supportive relationship with them
- Children involved in identifying their needs and planning their support
- Parents/carers involved in identifying their needs and planning their support
- Children think services are responding to their needs
- Parents/carers think services are responding to their needs
Child outcomes
Children:

- Are safe where they live
- Have a healthy development
- Engage in education
- Are settled and happy where they live
- Have their mental health needs met
- Engage in early education
- Achieve stability and permanence
- Have stable and positive educational experiences
- Make good progress in education
Making sense of the data

- **Robust statistical evidence** to challenge assessments based on data which do not measure child outcomes nor important intermediate outcomes

- **Triangulation**: none of the statistics that can be developed from the framework are designed to be used in isolation. No single statistic can capture the complexity in which CSCS operate and the support they deliver to some of the most vulnerable children and families in our society
Making sense of the data – some examples

• Analysis can raise important questions about the role of partner agencies
• Data on outcomes could be linked to financial data
• Explore the influence of socio, economic, demographic and cultural factors
• Explore outcomes for children with different needs and accessing different services
• Benchmarking to get a sense of what kind of improvements local CSCS should expect if their involvement has worked
• Assess CSCS performance at different stages of their improvement journey
Next steps
Piloting the framework – overarching plans

• Work with a small number of local authority CSCS
  • Importance of the inclusion of authorities with different approaches to the use of data (recognition of capacity and capability issues)
  • Test and develop the framework to ensure it is of use for local and regional strategic and operational purposes
  • Draw on existing learning about the development and implementation of frameworks and tools

• Nationally applicable
  • Department for Education
  • Ofsted
  • WW CSC
Piloting the framework - specifics

- Assess the validity and reliability of existing outcome indicators
- Develop new outcome indicators using existing data
- Assess the suitability of existing tools to collect data on the features of the organisation, social work practice and workforce
- Develop and test a tool to collect data from children and families
- Consider the ethical and methodological challenges involved in collecting data from CSCS users
- Collect and analyse data on intermediate and child outcomes and explore if and how the analysis helps to make better informed decisions
Small group discussions

• What are the main considerations in designing the pilot phase?
  • Have we missed anything?
  • What might be the barriers and facilitators to the implementation and uptake of the framework?
    • How might we mitigate the barriers?
    • How can we build momentum?

• Are there others who we should be including in the pilot phase?
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http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/measuring-outcomes-for-childrens-social-care-services/

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