

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **Planning and Performance Improvement**

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## PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Following the introduction of [Single Outcome Agreements](#) between Scottish Government and Local Authorities there has been a major shift in the gathering of performance information, Scottish Government no longer sets detailed targets linked to demands for performance reports. Instead Local authorities and their partners now determine through the Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs), subject to the 15 commitments in the Concordat, what information will be reported to communities about achievement against outcomes. Local Authorities are not held to account for performance unless it is part of the SOAs, or a statutory requirement (which includes the requirement to demonstrate best value). This is an important condition of the empowering relationship reflected in the Concordat.

[The Planning and Performance Improvement Framework](#) (PPIF) (2010) provides a voluntary framework for management information to support local areas in their work in addressing offending by young people. It has been developed to help local areas measure, at a strategic level, how well they are achieving the aims of [Preventing Offending by Young People – a Framework for Action](#) and delivering benefits and change for children and young people who offend, through their local inputs and activities. It also provides a mechanism to demonstrate at both a local and national level the impact of practice, as well as providing a tool that local areas can use to help manage services and plan future activity. The PPIF aims to:

Create a framework for robust performance management information which supports local areas in understanding, reflecting on and improving performance.  
Improve the quality and availability of national and local management information relevant to this agenda.  
Provide a mechanism to support local areas in reporting against their Single Outcome Agreements.

This self assessment tool may help address issues identified in Audit Scotland's report '[Dealing with Offending by Young People](#)' (2007) which noted that in the recording of accurate data on the performance and effectiveness of Youth Justice Services across Scotland was insufficient. The most up to date audit data on criminal justice can be found in Audit Scotland's '[An Overview of Scotland's Criminal Justice System](#) (2011)

### CONTEXT

It is important to stress that local authorities and their partners will not be held to account by Scottish Government or expected to report to central government on performance against the PPIF. However it provides a useful tool to support local areas in understanding, reflecting on and improving performance, and local authorities are encouraged to use it for that purpose and the Planning and Performance Improvement Framework viewed as a working document. It is the government's intention that it will continue to evolve as practice responds to new challenges

and opportunities in this area and as systems and procedures for recording and sharing information develop.

The PPIF is divided into four areas to reflect the key themes identified in [Preventing Offending by Young People – A Framework for Action](#):

Prevention  
Early and Effective Intervention  
Managing High Risk  
Victims and Community Confidence

The indicators in the PPIF have been selected specifically to capture performance data which will measure progress against meeting the aims of the partnership framework *Preventing Offending by Young People – A Framework for Action*. It is recognised that there are a number of other risk factors associated with children and young people becoming involved in offending e.g. difficult family backgrounds, substance misuse, domestic violence, exclusion from school, truancy etc. The performance data collected through this PPIF is intended to underpin qualitative data collected on these wider issues, for example through inspection or self evaluation.

The local performance indicators contained within the PPIF are divided into:

**Intermediate outcome indicators** – The intermediate outcomes measure the benefits and changes resulting from the activities of an organisation or service over the medium term. Achievement of intermediate outcomes would be expected to contribute to the achievement of high level outcomes in the long term (for example one or more of the 15 outcomes in the National Performance Framework). It is envisaged that these indicators could be used to support local areas to report against their Single Outcome Agreements.

**Local activity indicators** – are locally determined approaches which clearly contribute to the achievement of the intermediate outcomes. This information will be of most use to local areas and will be used at a local level, on a voluntary basis, to inform how well local services are achieving the outcomes.

**Inputs** – describe the resources required locally for delivery and management of services and how those are used. Inputs enable the local activities to be delivered, which in turn contribute to the intermediate outcomes. The effective and efficient use of resources should be monitored at a local level.

The PPIF is not intended to be prescriptive and the use of indicators is a matter for local choice and subject to availability of data. If a local area chooses to use this PPIF they may select those indicators most relevant to their local priorities or include others as appropriate

The following youth crime indicators are included in the [Scottish Policing Performance Framework](#):

Number of crimes and offences committed by children and young people (aged 8 to 17 inclusive) recorded within the period; and  
Number of child and young people offenders (aged 8 to 17 inclusive) recorded within the period.

This will provide an overall picture of youth offending levels and will be reported nationally through the Scottish Policing Performance Framework from 2009-10 onwards. It is anticipated that youth offending indicators within the SPPF will be developed further in future years as policing practices respond to the new challenges in this area and as crime recording systems develop

The Planning and Performance Improvement Framework has been set out in such a way that it can be adapted to the local needs of individual areas in ways that allow for individual areas to choose relevant indicators for their service which they are able to effectively gather and use as benchmarks for their own performance. (See Appendix Planning and Performance Improvement Framework)

#### **SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS**

**Youth Justice Services like all Local Authority provision are delivered within the context of Single Outcome Agreements with service targets being developed in relation to the outcomes within each area.**

The [Concordat](#) between the Scottish Government and COSLA agreed in November 2007 set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government, based on mutual respect and partnership. It underpins the funding provided to local government over the period 2008-09 to 2010-2011

A central element of the new relationship was the ending of ring fencing of local government funding and the creation of a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) between each council, initially, and the Scottish Government, based on the 15 [National Outcomes](#). All SOAs from 2009-10 onward are between each Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the Scottish Government. An SOA is the means by which CPPs agree their strategic priorities for their local area and express those priorities as outcomes to be delivered by the partners, either individually or jointly, while showing how those outcomes should contribute to the Scottish Government's relevant National Outcomes.

The National Outcomes are part of the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) but they also reflect established corporate and community plan commitments across Scotland's councils and CPPs. Progress on these mutually agreed outcomes for Scotland as a whole cannot in most cases happen unless progress is made at local level

Further information and advice on Single outcome agreements can be gained from the [Improvement Service](#).

#### **The Care Inspectorate**

From April 2011 Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland, (SCSWIS) - [The Care Inspectorate](#) - took over the role of providing public assurance on service quality, holding councils and service providers to account and targeting support for service improvement. SCSWIS replaced SWIA (the Social Work Inspection Agency), The Care Commission and relevant parts of HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspector of Education) which had responsibility for Children's Services and Child Protection Services).

The decision to integrate these bodies was made by Scottish Government in order to improve the effectiveness of these bodies. SCSWIS will continue to provide a proportionate and targeted approach to scrutiny and improvement by building on the previous responsibilities of SWIA and their inspection role to

provide an objective, evidence-based assessment of how well people are being served by their social work services;

make a constructive contribution towards the further improvement of the services provided;

help safeguard the interests of people who use services, and carers; and  
help councils to develop a local area approach to improving services.

These objectives are achieved by a combination of self assessment by local authorities and third sector organisations and scrutiny of performance by visiting Inspections.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

SWIA's performance improvement process included:

initial scrutiny level assessment (ISLA);

targeted and proportionate scrutiny response; and

On-going support and capacity building in self-evaluation and improvement.

The principles underpinning their methodology are that it is:

risk-based;

proportionate;

open and transparent;

accurate and relevant;

timely; and

focussed on continuous improvement and development.

Advice and guidance for local authorities on preparation for Inspections are provided by SWIA and can be accessed from the [Care Inspectorate](#) website.

## Practice Monitoring and Evaluation

If evaluation is to become rooted in a culture of practice, it is important to build on the day-to-day ways in which practitioners review and make evaluative sense of their practice activities. This, in turn, requires a practical system whereby regular monitoring and reviewing of young people's needs and risks individually and in aggregate form can be used to provide data for service planning, performance and delivery and for the development of service pathways.

Social work literature has always stressed the importance of evaluation as an essential ingredient of effective practice. This should include basic feedback data from those in receipt of services through to data from systematic case reviews as a platform for continuous improvement. However, without good data, whether generated by internal self-assessment or rigorous and systematic external appraisal, there is no practical way of knowing if young people are being advantaged or disadvantaged by provision or of identifying unmet needs and service gaps and shortfalls.

Monitoring is primarily about processes and for verification purposes. It involves routine gathering of information in order to know what is happening. Monitoring data is essential for any process of quality assurance (QA) to embrace all the activities that go into producing an effective outcome. This requires data on inputs (the resources invested in a planned activity) and outputs (what the planned activity has done) and a practitioner and management commitment to gathering and using data at all levels of the organisation.

Agency **monitoring** should be integral to the design of planned intervention and may include a range of aspects that focus on:

- profiling information on young people who have accepted and 'rejected' the planned activity;
- the adequacy of resources and services;
- whether interventions were delivered as planned by appropriately trained staff;
- attendance and completion rates;
- levels of participation or compliance;
- the methods used;
- adherence to activity or programme plans or manuals and planned style of delivery;
- whether the dynamic need and risk factors are matched by those targeted by the planned activity;
- staff continuity;
- staff selection, training, support and supervision.

**Evaluation** involves finding out whether the planned activity is achieving its objectives and involves measuring outcomes (the product of inputs and outputs). It is likely to require collecting non-routine information in addition to routine data and may require specially designed measurement tools.

The general expectation is that evaluation of effectiveness in youth justice will ultimately be judged by re-offending data. Re-offending rates, while important, are not straightforward measures and many intervening variables can influence outcomes. It is equally important to use interim and 'proxy' measures to demonstrate that the planned intervention is doing what is intended in meeting need and building the young person's resources (human capital). This may require providing evidence of the acquisition of knowledge, changes in understanding and attitudes and acquisition of skills as part of equipping young people for change.

These measures can show change over time against stated aims and objectives and possibly impact on the perceived need and risk targeted by the planned activity.

There are a number of practical methods for gathering data routinely for evaluation that could provide evidence for practice reviews, including:

- changes in knowledge and understanding over time;
- attitude and behaviour change (including skill development) which are linked to the approved activity's objectives;
- feedback from young people, family members and significant others where appropriate;
- feedback from the range of staff delivering services;
- service shortfall and unmet need;
- re-offending, re-referral or reconviction rates.

While most ongoing practice evaluation will be undertaken internally, as part of establishing progress with individual cases, the information, if made available in an aggregated form and shared between colleagues, can contribute to a process of continuous improvement and inform practice development over time. The contribution of a person to 'champion' evaluation has been established as crucial to programme integrity and to positive outcomes whatever their background - administrative, research or practitioner.

Evaluation is not value free and short and long-term goals are inevitably directed and influenced by values and 'pressures' within the work environment. Practice in youth justice is subject to many value conflicts and is constantly open to political manipulation. Sound evaluation is only possible if practice or service aims and objectives are clear and measurable. Acronyms such as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-limited; see Talbot, 1996) or SMARTER (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-limited, Evaluated and Resourced) exhort practitioners to incorporate core and rigorous data gathering into their day-to-day practice.

Some core criteria have to be set in advance to establish outcomes. It is also important to have a team or agency commitment to applying the same data standards to all aspects of work. The development of service standards can help ([see Standards](#)). Paradoxically, they can equally support minimalist approaches if measurable objectives for provision are absent. Meeting minimum standards are often sufficient to ensure contact and to hold young people and others

to account for supervision or 'responsibility' purposes but will seldom suffice to achieve change objectives.

Effective change-related practice requires matching resources capable of achieving the outcomes set to resources that provide for relevant **duration, intensity and sequencing** of intervention(s) and allow baselines to be established for 'premium' change services as well as for minimal contact provision to meet formal 'standards'.

Practice monitoring and evaluation can operate as the 'glue' to the integrity of individual interventions and agency provision. Practitioners cannot achieve this by themselves. Equally, strategic planners cannot develop evidence or needs-led provision without data from practitioners. Middle and resources managers are the conduit through which the quality of practice data should be monitored and through whom data should flow to strategists.

### **Measuring change: what are good outcomes?**

Evaluation assumes that objectives for a given intervention or supervision programme can be specified – immediate, short and longer term – delivered as planned (programme integrity) and measured and aggregated in some way. The basic thinking that underpins an action plan is the same for service planning in general and tends to be directed by a common set of questions that require some defined ambition and a standard or measure that can be aggregated.

### **Questions for measuring success**

What is the service intervention trying to do?  
What difference is it trying to make?  
What activity needs to be undertaken to achieve these outcomes?  
With whom as partners and over what period of time?  
What resources are needed to do more or to do differently?  
How will we know if it has made a difference?  
What is needed in order to collect evidence about the difference interventions are making?

The evaluation 'gold standard' is claimed for randomised controlled trials (RCT) and experimental designs where the effects of an intervention are assessed in relation to 'no intervention' or to a 'standard' approach and then a comparison made. This allows for a measure of the effect or impact of method A compared to method B; for example structured family group work compared to standard supervision (however defined), providing A and B are sufficiently different to have a differential effect.

Few practice evaluations in the UK meet this standard. Nonetheless, familiarity with basic research methods can maximise the opportunities for data generation as part of meaningful day-to-day practice. What is important is that practice is 'intelligent' enough to generate data that allows some level of ongoing evaluation that can be shared with recipients and with colleagues in formal case reviews. At the same time, if this practice data can be presented in a

format for aggregation, despite its limitations, it could be harvested and utilised to help establish patterns and trends to assist practitioners, managers and strategists to improve performance and service development.

Commonplace methodologies that could be used in practice, if the circumstances allow, might include:

1. **Follow-up (post-test) single case data** on a group (caseload) of young people is useful as formative feedback to users and for supervision review purposes, even though it will not produce rigorous outcome data.
2. **'Before and after' single case or group data** will allow for some indication of 'distance travelled'. This is important in any change endeavour even though outcomes cannot be ascribed exclusively to the intervention.
3. **Post-test:** two groups of young people using random allocation of young people to different interventions. This is unlikely to be very realistic in practice except possibly where there are waiting lists for a structured programme or specific intervention and 'standard' supervision or 'check in' is offered instead.
4. **Pre-test post-test** using two groups (or two different caseloads) of young people as comparison groups; random allocation would be preferable.
5. **Repeated measures:** two groups of young people randomly assigned the same intervention at different times.
6. **Time series measures** on a group of young people, normally subject to multiple observations rather than formal tests, although could be both, over a period of time corresponding to statutory reviews.
7. **Single-subject experiments** require repeated measures of the same young person before, during and after the intervention, could be done on one caseload or on a team's workload.

Case reviews, monitoring and evaluation provide opportunities for young people and their family and significant others to have their say, to contribute to setting priorities and to influence practice planning of services. It is now fairly commonplace to use tools or aids in practice whereby young people and family members are asked to complete a questionnaire before and after a session or sequence e.g the ASSET [What do you think?](#) Form. Often, however, these forms contain free text that cannot be easily aggregated. Practitioners can utilise a continuum of measures ranging from a crude Likert scales (for example, rating 1-5 or using 'smiley faces') that captures some measure of learning, interest, enjoyment and satisfaction with the experience through to completing systematic psychometric testing or standardised tools as part of a formal assessment and evaluation. Translating information into Likert scores or similar numerical measures need not replace traditional open text recording but it can generate, albeit crude, measures to assist practitioners and the agency in detecting patterns and trends of client change over time. It can also provide data on the possible effects of different types of provision without denying the limitations or over-stating the weight of the evidence produced.

Young people can be supported to score themselves on completion of a case simulation or knowledge 'test'. If this can be done on a computer with a programme to generate an automatic individual score it can be used to feed an anonymous score to a database for group analysis.

For many practitioners, ongoing evaluation is likely to involve a single case approach. This can involve systematic observation as part of the practice process, setting up a notional baseline measure of a problem and providing a contextualised understanding of the nature of the problem in a young person's life, as part of an assessment and planning process. While this has its limitations, systematic observation is a valid evaluative method for the study of hidden or elusive domains, like motives, memories, thought processes, withheld actions, feelings and emotions that accompany overt behaviours. Structured tools such as [Asset and Onset](#), [YLS-CMI](#), [Crime Pics II](#) (Frude et al, 1998) can equally assist a young person in examining perceived changes overtime while providing scored data for your agency.

### **Case example**

Includem has in place a [Young People's Outcomes Framework](#) based around the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and their service commissioners'/funders' requirements. This is helpful both to keep practitioners focussed on a welfare-based approach which is best for young people, as well as linking in with integrated support planning processes. The organisation has found it useful to have a basket of 'desired' outcomes for each service, with specific ones identified for each young person. This reinforces Includem's aim to tailor support to fit individual needs whilst also allowing us to aggregate up outcome measures.

Includem's framework shows how they measure each outcome, using hard evidence whenever possible (e.g. number of young people successfully maintained in the family home). In addition they use [Teen Star](#) (one in the family of Outcomes Stars) to measure more soft outcomes. This tool involves young people in the evaluation process - the website [www.outcomesstar.org](http://www.outcomesstar.org) provides useful information. This fits with GIRFEC and is holistic rather than solely looking at crime sustaining (criminogenic) indicators.

Barnardo's also has an [Outcome Framework](#) in place. Each service has a set of no more than 10 outcome indicators which fit with the explicit aims of each service. Any young person referred to a Barnardo's service is assessed in relation to the outcome indicators relevant for the service and from these no more than 5 are chosen that form the basis for the action plan with the child. The child is rated on a scale of 1-5, rating take place in partnership between the worker, child and other individuals (1 representing no need for a service and 5 representing critical need meaning that action needs to be taken immediately). This forms a baseline for measuring progress and outcome indicators are then revisited in reviews at least every 6 months. Outcome indicators are recorded electronically so that information can be used to measure effectiveness of intervention with respect to individual progress, at a service level and at an organisational level.

