



Talking Points: Personal Outcomes Approach

Information for People using Community Care Services and their Carers (Aug 09)

What are outcomes and why are we talking about them?

- Community care services in Scotland are moving towards focusing on outcomes for service users and carers
- This means thinking more about the impacts or effects of services on the people who use them.
- To focus on outcomes also means that staff need to talk to users and carers about what they want to achieve, and how services can support their goals



- A lot of research has already taken place with people who use services and their carers, and this has told us about the outcomes that matter most to people e.g. being as well as you can, being listened to, having a social life.
- These outcomes are behind the Personal Outcomes Approach, which is a way of talking to people about their lives and about services, and of trying to organise services more around what matters to people.
- Focusing on outcomes means moving away from a tick box approach to thinking differently or 'outside the box' about how to achieve goals

Which outcomes are important?

- The two tables below summarise the outcomes that are most important to most service users and carers. These are the outcomes that staff are encouraged to talk about when they use the Talking Points: Personal Outcomes Approach.
- We know that these outcomes are important as they are what people who use services and their carers have told us over more than 10 years of research.

Table 1: Outcomes important to service users

Quality of Life	Process	Change
Feeling safe	Listened to	Improved confidence/morale
Having things to do	Having a say	Improved skills
Seeing people	Treated with respect	Improved mobility
Staying as well as you can	Responded to	Reduced symptoms
Living where you want/ as you want	Reliability	

Table 2: Outcomes important to carers

Quality of life cared for person	Quality of life for the carer	Managing the caring role	Process
Quality of life for the cared for person	Maintaining health and well-being	Choices in caring, including the limits of caring	Valued/respected and expertise recognised
	A life of their own	Feeling informed/skilled/equipped	Having a say in services
	Positive relationship with the person cared for	Satisfaction in caring	Flexible and responsive to changing needs
	Freedom from financial hardship	Partnership with services	Positive relationship with practitioners
			Accessible, available and free at the point of need

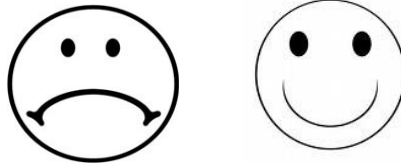
I have been told I am going to have an 'Outcomes Focussed Assessment'. What does this mean for me?

- What this involves for you is having a conversation with staff about the roles everybody can play in working towards the outcomes that matter to you. So it is about the role that you and people you know want to play, as well as the role of services. It is about working in partnership to achieve your goals
- Sometimes having a conversation about what you want to achieve can be helpful in itself in providing an opportunity to think about your life from a different viewpoint



- If you find it upsetting to talk about things in your life that you are not used to talking about, you should tell the member of staff that it is difficult. If you would like a break from talking about these things, you can ask for the interview to be continued another day
- As well as talking about outcomes when your involvement with services begins, staff will want to talk to you later on about whether or not you have been able to achieve the goals you hoped to achieve. This is called a review.
- At this stage, it is important that you get a chance to talk about what is working and what isn't, and whether any changes need to be made.
- Community care services want to gather better information about the services that they provide. As well as helping to make decisions about your life, the information you give them might help them to make decisions about how community care services are provided in future.

- Some of the outcomes at review are about how you have been treated by services eg. were listened to, did staff treat you with respect. It might be that you have found some things have worked well and some not so well.



- If you have concerns it is important that your service knows about them. If you feel able to, it would be useful for the service if you could raise your concerns directly with them. However, sometimes people find it difficult to be critical or to raise issues with their own care manager.
- Your service should tell you about how you can raise concerns if you are worried or unhappy about how you have been treated, so that you know what to do if you don't feel comfortable talking about this at review.

What difference does an outcomes approach make in practice?

The examples below show you how the outcomes approach can work in practice.

Example 1 – Outcomes for a service user

Mrs A referred herself to Community Care services for 'meals on wheels'. She made this referral because she was increasingly breathless and reluctant to go out. She was lonely and finding it difficult to motivate herself to cook. She also worried about money, because she was on a low income and couldn't afford the taxi fare to the shops.

Mrs A didn't know much about community care services or what help they could provide, but when she confided in her next-door neighbour, he told her that she could get meals delivered by social services. It would have been easy for the assessor to 'assess Mrs A for meals on wheels'. However, by taking an outcomes based

approach, the assessor identified that the most important outcomes for Mrs A were:

- Better management of her COPD
- Be able to get around her home and community
- Have good social contacts
- Maximise her income



A range of supports were arranged including a visit from the district nurse to review Mrs A's medication. Mrs A was also supported to become a member of the local community car scheme and Health in Later Life group. Mrs A also put in a claim for Pension Credit. Her self esteem and sense of wellbeing greatly improved as a result of these supports, and she began to cook more for herself, which may not have been the case if her request for meals on wheels had been met without question.

Six months after the support was put in place the same worker came back to ask Mrs A if she felt better. This was the review. Mrs A told the worker that as a result of:

- her medication review she was less breathless
- being part of the community car scheme she was able to go shopping once a week and she was also going out to see friends more
- joining the local Health in Later Life group she had made new friends and was involved in new activities
- her claim for Pension Credit she was better off each month and this had lifted a great worry from her mind
- all of the support she was feeling more confident and much happier



Example 2 – Outcomes for a carer

Mr B first came into contact with his local Carers Centre through their work with the local GP practice, which was aimed at identifying hidden carers. Mr B was working full time and also caring for his wife with a complex long term condition. Following a number of discussions by telephone Mr B agreed to complete a carers' assessment with the support of the Carer Advice Worker. Mr B's main concern was balancing his work and caring roles. By taking an outcomes focused approach to the assessment Mr B and the Carer Advice Worker identified the following options and support:



- Attending a training course, with other carers, aimed at supporting him to look at ways of dealing with the emotional and practical impact of caring for his wife.
- Making contact with the Social Work Department who carried out an assessment of his wife's needs. This resulted in his wife being offered social activities during the day when Mr B was at work.
- Talking to his employer about more flexible working arrangements which would allow him to continue working but also continue to care for his wife.
- Talking to his family about being involved in supporting his wife.

Ten months on from the original contact the outcomes focused assessment and support has resulted in:

- Mr B being able to continue to work knowing that his wife is supported and happy in her new activities. As a result his work is again more satisfying and less stressful.
- His wife having social activities which extend her networks of support but also give her new friends and interests.
- Mr B's family assisting in supporting his wife, again allowing him to work and widening the circle of support and contacts for his wife. Increasing the sense of security for both Mr B and his wife.
- Mr B having the confidence and motivation to undertake training on presentation skills so that he can talk to practitioners about the importance of a good, outcomes focused assessment.
- Mr B having continued contact with other carers who are able to offer peer support and social contact, which because of his work/caring role balance he had previously lost.

