



Cabinet Office

Outcomes Frameworks: a guide for providers and commissioners of youth services

December 2014

Background

As part of its responsibility for youth policy, Cabinet Office has been working to support the youth sector to capture and increase the impact of its services for young people.

We have heard from youth service providers and commissioners that the landscape of available outcomes frameworks designed to support them to demonstrate their impact is confusing. This guide to outcomes frameworks aims to make it simpler to navigate this landscape and forms part of wider work to support the sector to feel confident in demonstrating their impact. In addition to investing in research to strengthen the evidence base behind skills for life and work, we work with leading youth sector and academic organisations through the sector-led Centre for Youth Impact. The Centre, which focuses on evidence, capacity building and practice development, will increase the capacity of those involved in providing and commissioning services for young people to generate and use high quality evidence in the design, delivery and evaluation of those services. The Centre has made impact measurement training and an online portal available to the youth sector, bringing resources and information on programmes and the evidence underpinning them, into one place. This guide will be included in resources brought together for the Centre's online portal.

Explanations of underlined terms in the guide are provided in a glossary from page 25.

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Introduction

This guide provides an overview of the most applicable [outcomes frameworks](#) that have been developed for use by [providers](#) and [commissioners](#) across youth services. We have developed it for anybody in the youth sector who is considering the future strategy of their organisation and specifically, how to improve the [outcomes](#) for young people as a result of their work and communicate these more clearly. It also describes how outcomes frameworks can benefit your [initiative](#) as part of your wider work to demonstrate the difference you make for young people. We have collaborated with youth sector stakeholders to ensure that this guide helps to bring clarity to the landscape of outcomes frameworks and reflects existing work in the youth sector. An overview of existing outcomes frameworks is provided from page 12.

We are grateful to The Big Lottery Fund, NCVYS, Local Government Association, The Social Research Unit at Dartington, The Young Foundation, NPC, Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, Step Up To Serve, Project Oracle, London Youth, service providers, local authorities, independent funders and regional youth work units for sharing their experience and expertise as we developed this guide.

Across the sector, there is considerable work being done to identify, define and test the most important outcomes that will help young people to achieve their goals in life and work. There is also growing consensus amongst the voluntary sector, business, and local and central government on the importance of strengthening the evidence base that underpins the value of youth services. Government has previously supported the youth sector to take a more outcomes focused approach through the work of the [Catalyst Consortium](#), and more recently through [Inspiring Impact](#) – an ongoing, sector-led programme to improve [impact](#) measurement across the social sector.

As a result of this, many organisations have created and are using outcomes frameworks as part of their efforts to increase and demonstrate the impact of their work with young people to a wide audience. This guide is equally relevant to providers and commissioners, recognising that both play a vital role in being able to tell a stronger, evidence based story about the value and impact of youth services for young people. Other sectors, including health, culture, sports and

education are also using outcomes frameworks to better understand whether these services are making a positive change to outcomes for their beneficiaries and communities.

What to expect from this guide?

This guide should help you, as a provider or commissioner:

- understand how measuring impact can help you to learn from and improve your initiatives;
- understand how the ability to demonstrate impact can, for providers, help you develop a more powerful case when applying for funding and, for commissioners, enable you to assess the potential effectiveness of investment;
- begin to identify the outcomes which matter most to the young people with whom you work and your organisation;
- understand the difference between existing outcomes frameworks, how they relate to one another and what they look like when in use 'on the ground'; and
- understand the next steps to integrate an outcomes framework into your work and where to go for further guidance and support.

Section 1: Why is it necessary for youth services to demonstrate their impact?

Youth services deliver at a critical stage for young people as they develop. At their core youth services address the complex personal and social skills necessary for a safe, healthy and fulfilling life, and to make a successful transition from education to employment. However, with such a variety of initiatives in place to support young people achieve these same goals, it can be a challenge for providers and commissioners to know which initiatives are having an impact on young people reaching valued outcomes and how this is being achieved.

Understanding the change you want to make, which activities have already been shown to achieve this, and learning from your assessment of whether or not this is being achieved is beneficial because:

- you will be able to use the evidence gathered through monitoring and evaluation to **assess and improve your initiative**. For example, deciding whether you have identified the right outcomes and are designing your activities and resources to better achieve your desired outcomes for young people;
- your evidence will **add to information about existing good practice**, creating a stronger evidence base for the wider youth sector and the value of youth services;
- **initiatives are more likely to be effective if their design is informed by evidence of what works** and when the activities are connected to outcomes for young people;
- for providers, when budgets are tighter, demonstrating how your initiative brings about the changes young people and commissioners care most about can help to **build a stronger case for investment**;
- similarly, for commissioners, an initiative's ability to demonstrate its impact is **key to considering whether investment is likely to be effective**; and
- for commissioners, being clear on the intermediate and longer-term outcomes an initiative aims to achieve allows you to **align these with your priority longer-term outcomes for local young people**.

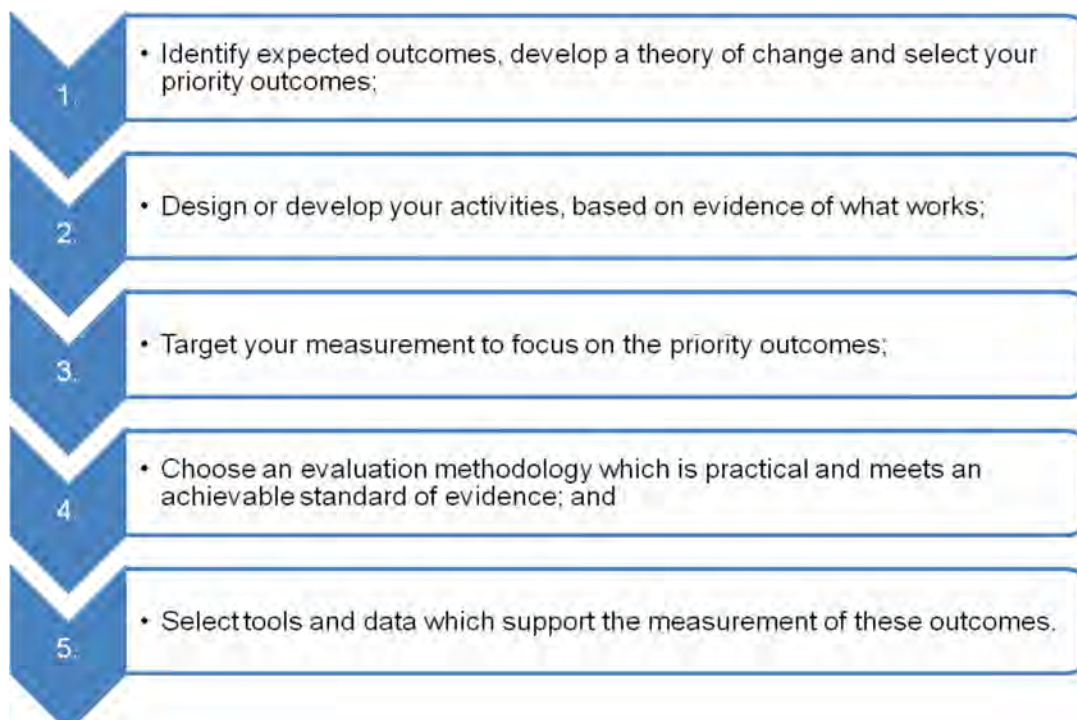
Section 2: How can I better understand whether my initiative is having an impact?

Inspiring Impact’s *The Code of Good Impact Practice* describes the activities an organisation should do to assess whether it is making an impact as their ‘impact practice’. This includes planning the impact you want to have, planning how to measure it, collecting information about it, making sense of that information, communicating it and learning from it.

Various resources have been developed to clarify the elements involved in developing your impact

practice. These are included in the section *What other support is there and where can I find it?* and usually incorporate the steps below.

It is important to recognise that your own impact practice should be proportional to the scale of your organisation or initiative’s work. It should allow you to identify the outcomes that matter most to you; but these should also be the outcomes that you have the resources and supporting evidence to recognise and measure. For providers and commissioners, initiatives should be considered in relation to others of similar aim and size in order to understand what is good practice and proportionate to your needs.



Section 3:

What role does an outcomes framework play?

Developing or applying an outcomes framework will be one part of the impact practice you put in place to enable you to assess and then demonstrate the impact of your initiative. To support organisations to develop their impact practice, a number of outcomes frameworks (presented from page 12) have been developed to be applicable to specific initiatives (such as youth social action or employability programmes) or the whole youth sector. Individual organisations can either apply these outcomes frameworks directly to their work, or use them as a basis for developing their own, bespoke framework.

Outcomes frameworks will be of value when identifying the outcomes you expect to achieve, and setting out a theory for how your activities might bring about this change (step 1 on page 7). Outcomes frameworks may also help during the design and development of your initiative and planning for measurement and evaluation (steps 2-5 on page 7). This guide focuses primarily on the role of outcomes frameworks during step 1. It does not provide guidance on how to develop your own bespoke outcomes framework.

The following sections lay out what should be considered during step 1 and at what stages it is important to refer to outcomes frameworks.

1. Who should be involved?

Staff at all levels should be encouraged to take part in discussions to:

- help identify the outcomes they feel are meaningful, measurable and achievable;
- build a greater sense of ownership in achieving them and measuring progress against them;
- build buy-in for how measuring your impact will support the development of the initiative rather than just being a formality; and
- identify opportunities to focus resources on monitoring your priority outcomes, and measuring what matters to you.

Young people, as beneficiaries, should be consulted to:

- identify the outcomes they feel will contribute to their development and help them to meet their aspirations;
- allow them to have equal authority in the design and delivery of initiatives; and
- increase their awareness of the reasons for measuring these outcomes now and after the initiative, and actively engage them in the design of your impact practice.

Providers and commissioners should engage with each other, as important stakeholders, as early as possible, to:

- understand the outcomes which matter most to both of you;
- be clear on the outcomes that research indicates can reasonably be achieved and attributed to your intended activities;
- consider whether your outcomes could be agreed using the standardised language of an outcomes framework; and
- agree what kind of evaluation would be sufficient to demonstrate whether you have achieved these outcomes, and is achievable within available resources.

2. What sort of outcomes should I consider?

Between them, outcomes frameworks cover a range of ultimate goals that could be achieved through initiatives for young people, but some key themes clearly emerge from among these. The [Catalyst Consortium's Framework of Outcomes for Young People](#) summarised these as: achieving in education, having positive relationships, career success and being both physically and mentally healthy.

Supporting a positive change for a young person in any of these key areas will involve a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic and short, intermediate and long-term outcomes, and they should be:

- clear and concise – making use of standardised language;
- meaningful and measurable;
- distinct from your input and outputs;
- achievable during the length of your intervention or attributable as a result of the initiative (if measured at a later stage); and
- easy to understand by staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders.

For commissioners in particular, this stage will enable you to identify outcomes, which may be beneficial to your wider priorities for young people, and which may have already been identified through mission and strategy documents. Evidence in support of some of the outcomes, that might be achieved through initiatives, may provide links to positive outcomes for physical and mental health, engagement in education, training and employment or family relationships.

3. What outcomes should I prioritise?

It is often recommended that your monitoring and evaluation resources are focused on measuring a few priority outcomes well. Although many outcomes are linked, developing or commissioning an initiative that aims to improve a string of outcomes makes it challenging to achieve and measure them effectively. By focusing on your priority outcomes you can increase the likelihood of achieving them, and make it easier to measure those which:

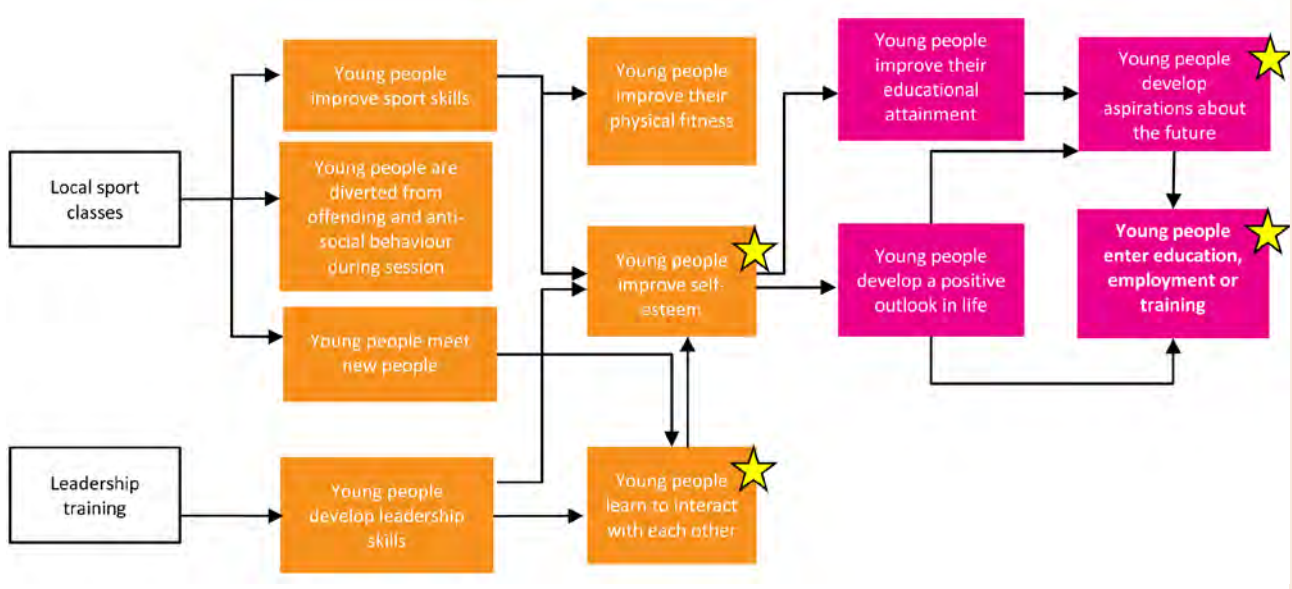
- your initiative directly influences;
- are valued by beneficiaries and stakeholders;
- are not expensive to measure; and
- will produce data which can be linked to existing evidence.

Developing a theory of change, which sets out how and why you believe your initiative will deliver impact, will enable you to lay out what your initiative aims to achieve (such as the progression from short-term outcomes through to longer-term outcomes) and how. A theory of change should also describe the relationship between your activities and the assumptions underpinning how you expect to have an impact. With your outcomes set out in this way, you can use your engagement with staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders to agree your priority outcomes.

Other guidance has been produced to demonstrate how to develop a theory of change and how this will help you to identify your priority outcomes. Available resources are included in the section [What other support is there and where can I find it?](#)

A theory of change with prioritised outcomes

This example initiative, from *Inspiring Impact Journey to Employment (JET) pack*, uses sport to engage 16-18 year old male teenagers and provides leadership training. The initiative aims to get young people involved in positive activities and interact with one another in a positive, respectful environment. The overall goals are to promote young people’s self esteem and improve their behaviour and teamwork skills; ultimately, raising their aspirations and helping them do better in school and employment. Priority intermediate and long-term outcomes have been marked with stars.



4. How can these be matched to existing outcomes frameworks?

Not all outcomes in a particular framework will be relevant to your initiative. You should look across a number of frameworks to understand what best fits with the needs of the young people you work with and which short-term and intermediate outcomes are shown, through evidence, to support your intended long-term outcomes. Providers and commissioners should consider these frameworks as a guide, using them to adopt standardised language when the definitions and evidence correctly match their intention and, if available, make use of connected measuring tools and evaluation guidance.

Referring to existing outcomes frameworks should complement the process of identifying your priority outcomes, not set the direction entirely. Similarly, it should not cause you to consider outcomes that are not relevant or important to you or your beneficiaries and stakeholders or are too far removed from the direct influence of your initiative.

Matching your outcomes to an outcomes framework

Building on the theory of change example provided above for the sports initiative, these are the matched outcomes that the initiative could adopt from [Inspiring Impact's JET Framework](#). The *JET Framework* then allows you to choose appropriate tools for your measurement, including surveys and scales.

<p>Emotional capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Grit and determination • Autonomy and control • Empathy 	<p>Qualifications, education + training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills • Achieving qualifications • Attendance and behaviour <p>Experiences + involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience • Perception of value of work experience • Networks • Community involvement <p>Career management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career direction • Job search skills • Presentation to employers • Confidence in finding employment • Entrepreneurship
<p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirations for education • Attitudes to work • Aspirations for work • Aspirations for the future 	
<p>Employability skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Communication • Problem solving • Self-management • Leadership 	
<p>Personal circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to transport • Access to the internet • Access to childcare • Access to support for young carers • Reduced substance abuse • Reduced offending/anti-social behaviour • Access to support for young people with physical and mental health problems 	<p>Employment + enterprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry into employment • Sustaining employment • Quality of employment • Satisfaction with employment

5. What are the benefits?

We could expect that as the use of sector-wide outcomes frameworks becomes more widespread, a stronger common language will build around the outcomes and evidence, and there will be increasing opportunities to learn from common practice within the youth sector. An outcomes framework should enable you to communicate your priority outcomes using language shared by the wider sector, and feel confident that they are rooted in research that has shown these types of outcomes to be of value to young people.

At the stage of assessing and demonstrating the impact of your initiative, the value of an outcomes framework will be the focus it brings to developing a proportionate approach to steps 2-5 (on page 7) of your impact practice: targeting your measurement to focus on what matters; choosing an evaluation methodology

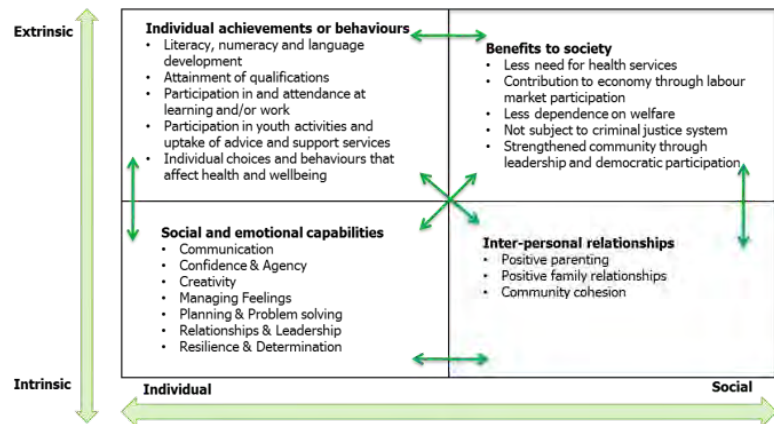
that is robust and practical; and selecting tools and data that support the measurement of these outcomes. By selecting measurement tools and evaluation methodologies on their robustness to demonstrate the outcomes that matter most to you, rather than all the things that could feasibly be monitored and measured, your process will be made more efficient and the end result a more powerful story of your impact. This ongoing approach to assessing your impact will enable you to continue to learn from and improve your service for young people.

Section 4: What outcomes frameworks are available?

This section brings together existing outcomes frameworks that have been developed for the youth sector. We have provided a brief overview of each of the frameworks but have not endorsed the use of any one in particular. The frameworks below have been developed to be applicable to specific initiatives (such as those with youth social action as the input/type of initiative, or employability as the ultimate outcome) or the whole youth sector.

Outcomes Framework

– Framework of Outcomes for Young People



Background

In 2011, the Department for Education commissioned the Catalyst Consortium, their strategic partner for young people (led by NCVYS and supported by NYA, Social Enterprise Coalition and The Young Foundation), to develop a framework that would help providers and commissioners identify and demonstrate the impact of developing social and emotional skills and the link with long-term outcomes. The framework can be applied to a wide group of young people and initiatives.

Relationship to other outcomes frameworks

The framework was designed to be widely accessible to the sector and continues to serve as a sector leader. In particular, the seven 'clusters of capabilities' outlined in the framework are referenced extensively in subsequent outcomes frameworks and have been applied by commissioners and providers when developing bespoke outcome frameworks. The seven clusters are:

- communication
- confidence and agency
- planning and problem solving
- relationships and leadership
- creativity
- resilience and determination
- managing feelings

Would it be suitable for my initiative?

It is useful for initiatives which:

- develop skills for life and work in young people in a broad range of ways;
- support the achievement of long-term outcomes such as educational attainment and employment; and
- are in the early stages or would like to improve their impact measurement practice.

The framework makes the link with existing research, and has set standardised language for outcomes, which is becoming increasingly consistent across the sector.

The framework also provides a matrix of tools for consideration and prompts to help understand what you should consider when selecting tools. It does not recommend particular tools and you may wish to seek further advice from evaluation support organisations and consider a range of tools before selecting any for your initiative.

Examples of how this outcomes framework has been used on the ground can be seen in London Youth and Lancashire County Council's case study.

For further information, see [Framework of Outcomes for Young People](#).

For examples of programmes who have used it, see [Noticing the Change](#).

Outcomes Framework

– Youth Social Action Quality Framework

Benefits for the individual		Benefits for the community
Optimism	Communication	Can be wide-ranging, from civic participation, health, educational engagement to safer communities, sustainability, voting, resilience and employability.
	Creativity	
Determination	Confidence and Agency	
	Planning and Problem solving	
	Resilience, Grit	
Emotional Intelligence	Leadership	
	Relationships	
	Managing feelings, Self control	

Background

In 2013, the Cabinet Office and the Step Up To Serve campaign commissioned The Young Foundation, NCVO and the Institute for Volunteering Research (now part of NCVO) to develop a Quality Framework that would capture the ‘double benefit’ of youth social action to the community and the individual.

Relationship to other outcomes frameworks

The framework was specifically designed to set out the outcomes for young people as a result of taking part in social action. Developed by the Young Foundation with input from the voluntary, education and business sectors, the framework brought together Catalyst Consortium’s *Framework of Outcomes for Young People* and the Confederation of British Industry’s (CBI) *First Steps* framework, which outlined the characteristics, values and habits that employers expect from employable young people.

Would it be suitable for my initiative?

It is useful for initiatives which:

- use youth social action to develop skills for life and work and support a range of positive outcomes such as high educational attainment, youth offender rehabilitation and social engagement.

The framework is being implemented and tested by over 60 programmes in receipt of grant funding from the Centre for Social Action and Cabinet Office. An accompanying set of outcome statements is also being tested.

An example of how this outcomes framework has been used can be seen in vInspired’s case study.

For further information, see [Youth Social Action Quality Framework](#).

Outcomes Framework

– Ready for Work Framework



Background

Ready for Work was commissioned by the social investor Impetus – Private Equity Foundation in 2014 to identify the capabilities deemed essential by employers. It aims to create a vocabulary around employability that is common across the sector.

Relationship to other outcomes frameworks

Ready for Work helps organisations with a long-term outcome of ‘getting and keeping a job’ to make improvements to programme design based on employer requirements. The framework identifies six essential capabilities young people need to possess in order to get and keep a job and acts as a starting point for organisations to develop meaningful short-term and intermediate outcomes. It builds on the work of other frameworks and additionally includes analysis of proven interventions that lead to work readiness capabilities, and highlights notable gaps in the evidence.

Would it be suitable for my initiative?

It is useful for initiatives which:

- have identified employability for young people as a long-term outcome; and
- are in the early stages of identifying short and intermediate outcomes specific to their organisation’s priorities.

For further information and future information on how it has been used on the ground, see [Ready for Work](#).

Outcomes Framework

– Journey to Employment (JET) Framework



Background

The *JET Framework* has been developed by Inspiring Impact to help organisations that work with young people to understand and measure the impact they have on the journey to employment. The framework builds on NPC’s *Impact Measurement in the NEETs sector* project and the *JET report*, which was published in 2013.

Relationship to other outcomes frameworks

The outcomes framework references Catalyst Consortium’s *Framework of Outcomes* by grouping outcomes under intrinsic and extrinsic groupings and continues to consider these intrinsic outcomes by recommending the use of indicators to assess the quality, not only the sustainability of moving into employment and enterprise for the young person.

Would it be suitable for my initiative?

It is useful for initiatives which:

- work with young people to support them as they transition to work; and
- are in the early stages or would like to improve their impact measurement practice.

The framework is accompanied by the *JET Pack* – a step-by-step guide to identifying what to measure, how and when to measure, and learning from the resulting information. It is possible to match your intended outcomes to NPC designed surveys and scales to support monitoring and evaluation.

An example of how this outcomes framework has been used can be seen in vInspired’s case study.

For further information, see [Journey to Employment \(JET\) Framework](#).

Section 5: How are outcomes frameworks being used in the youth sector?

vInspired – Building support in your organisation for an outcomes focused approach with a theory of change

vInspired recently set out to solve a problem: how can we embed evaluation more effectively? And how can we assess our impact across all of our programmes? To help solve this we realised it would be important to develop an outcomes framework to help improve the focus of evaluation on our priority outcomes across the programmes. To take a wider view and make sure there was support throughout the organisation to drive the change, we developed a theory of change for each programme.

We began by securing support throughout the organisation – senior management, trustees, stakeholders and programme teams and then consulted the existing guidance and resources to have an idea of what would be right for our organisation. Finally, we identified external support to draw upon expertise and provide an outside perspective during this important process.

We were aware that teams in the organisation were used to evaluation being ‘done to them’ but their involvement and buy-in would be key to our success. So we brought the entire organisation up to speed with training on theories of change and outcomes. We mapped a theory of change for each programme and product – keeping in mind the outcomes and language used in frameworks such as the *JET Framework* and the *Youth Social Action Outcomes Framework*. Over the coming months we will be building on this work to develop a strategic theory of change for the entire organisation.

What is different as a result?

- We are now piloting a standardised bespoke outcomes framework across all of our delivery programmes for 2014/15. This will enable us to report on overall outcomes (rather than outputs) achieved for young people across all our programmes; and
- This will support us to identify gaps in our support for young people and shape future programme development.

Our top tip:

It takes time, but by ‘selling’ not ‘telling’ and ensuring all staff understand the value of this work we have reached a real turning point in focussing our outcomes and impact.

London Youth – Developing and embedding an outcomes framework

London Youth is a network of 400 community youth organisations in neighbourhoods across the capital. Our mission is to support and challenge young people to become the best they can be. We do this by creating a broad and inclusive range of opportunities for young people and developing, training, connecting and quality assuring our membership network to deliver good youth work. Our operational model (as a provider and second tier infrastructure organisation for London) determined our method for implementing an outcomes-focused approach across our work. We are currently developing an organisation-wide framework that incorporates the Catalyst Consortium *Framework of Outcomes* for our services for young people, as well as an internally developed outcomes framework for our capacity building work with youth clubs and youth workers.

We acknowledged the need for dedicated resource (human and financial) to support our progression to become an organisation that learns from its experience and external evidence base, and that measuring effectiveness and efficiency across our work required a cultural shift.

By taking an evidence-informed approach, that placed the needs of practitioners and young people at the forefront of our programme design and evaluation, we developed theories of change (our practitioners call them Journeys of Change) for all our programmes and operations. Practitioners, managers and young people reviewed the research, selected indicators and discussed strengths and weakness of various measuring tools. We measure impact and progress using a mixed-method approach to determine what works, why and how.

What is different as a result?

- Delivery staff feel more empowered, are better engaged in programme design and evaluation and consciously use their journey of change in working with young people; and
- Organisational planning and decision-making is informed by credible evidence.

Our top tips:

Ensure that your work to demonstrate your impact reflects your organisation's mission and strategic objectives. Be prepared to support and challenge your staff during their own learning journey.

Be accountable to your beneficiaries, stakeholders and funders – involve them in your impact measurement practice, make it ambitious but take small and confident steps when implementing it.

Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation – Investing in outcomes

Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation (Impetus-PEF) is committed to transforming the lives of 11-24 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the support they need to succeed in education, find and keep jobs, and achieve their potential. We find the most promising charities working in these areas and support them to become highly effective in producing outcomes, which transform young people's lives. Then we help those organisations grow to increase the number of people they serve.

Impetus-PEF funds a specific range of outcomes with strong evidence of life-changing effects for young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds – educational attainment at age 16 and sustained employment by 25. Through our *Driving Impact* programme, we work with organisations delivering initiatives likely to lead to these meaningful long-term outcomes, and which can build a framework of short-term and intermediate outcomes, allowing them to manage and track the progress of their beneficiaries. This gives them the best chance of achieving the long-term goals for every young person.

We use outcomes frameworks to determine our own long-term outcomes, and to help the organisations we support refine theirs. Short-term and intermediate outcomes need to be 'bespoke' and tied tightly to the initiative's design. Outcomes frameworks provide a useful starting point.

Our new *Ready for Work* report identifies the six capabilities, which the evidence base and employers identify as essential for work. If securing employment is an organisation's long-term outcome, then developing these six capabilities in every young person they serve is a crucial short-term outcome that can be used to manage and measure their progress.

What is different as a result?

- Holding your organisation accountable to and managing resources against, defined long and short-term outcomes dramatically increases your effectiveness in achieving impact for beneficiaries; and
- It also provides high-quality data needed to progress up the evidence scale. Crucial to *Driving Impact* is the principle that the primary purpose of measuring outcomes is to improve the programme.

Our top tip:

Proving impact is important, but improving it is more so.

Lancashire County Council Young People's Services – Developing a curriculum framework

Lancashire County Council wanted to update and develop our existing Curriculum and Quality Assurance Frameworks for working with young people. For us these documents are essential as they outline practically how we deliver our vision and set out the key purposes and working methods to ensure positive outcomes for our local young people. Following the publication of the Catalyst Consortium's *Framework of Outcomes*, it seemed logical for us to adopt the research presented in this framework which argued that if young people develop a range of key capabilities then they are more likely to succeed in life.

Our curriculum framework consists of 6 'Core Curriculum Areas', which we consider to be essential for providing diverse learning opportunities for young people. Each of the core areas is underpinned with a series of 'curriculum outcomes', which reflect the *Framework of Outcomes* capability clusters. Our curriculum provides us with the framework for delivering across all three of our core purpose areas; youth work programmes, targeted youth support and learning and skills. Alongside developing our framework we developed our Quality Assurance and assessment measures so that we would be better able to measure our impact and evidence the difference we are making to young people's lives.

By planning interventions and programmes that we expect will lead to the development of these outcomes we can be confident that we will be supporting young people's social and emotional development. Over the next 12 months we will identify and record the outcomes we are best achieving through our programmes and identify the types of initiatives, which seem to have the most impact.

What is different as a result?

- Our bespoke framework will allow us to see where there may be gaps in our youth offer and where there is evidence of best practice, which can be shared with others in the sector.

Our top tip:

Listen to the outcomes that the young people you work with identify as important to them.

Present your framework in a way, which is understood by your beneficiaries. We did this by developing a version of the framework for our young people; it is their service.

Section 6: What other support is there and where can I find it?

This section brings together existing guidance on the use of outcomes frameworks and wider impact practice relevant to the youth sector. We have endeavoured to provide a brief overview of the available resources at this time and the organisations working within the sector to support this work. Each of the resources below has been developed to either provide a complete picture of impact measurement or focus on a particular element of this process. We have included them to show the breadth of support available and the considerable work underway to make an outcomes focused approach the norm.

Support organisations and initiatives

The [Centre for Youth Impact](#) was announced in September 2014 as a partnership of three organisations – National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), Project Oracle and the Social Research Unit at Dartington. The Centre for Youth Impact is a centre for evidence, capacity building and practice development. The Centre will increase the capacity of those involved in providing and commissioning services for young people to generate and use high quality evidence in the design, delivery and evaluation of those services.

[Commissioning Academy](#) is a development programme for senior leaders from all parts of the public sector to equip a cadre of professionals to deal with the challenges facing public services, take up new opportunities and commission the right for their communities. The academy is supported by Cabinet Office, the Local Government Association, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service, the Department for Education, the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Home Office.

[Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation](#) works with the most promising charities to drive impact and help more children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds succeed in education and employment.

[Inspiring Impact](#), launched in April 2012, is an ongoing, sector-led programme to improve impact measurement across the social sector. Cabinet Office has been working with the social sector to accelerate the uptake of impact measurement across the UK social sector. Cabinet Office has supported both the design of the programme alongside funding for the first two years. Inspiring Impact is managed and delivered by eight UK voluntary sector organisations:

- [Association of Charitable Foundations \(ACF\)](#) – the UK-wide support organisation for grant-making trusts and foundations;
- [Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations \(ACEVO\)](#) – membership body for chief executives, chairs, trustees and senior managers across the voluntary sector;
- [Building Change Trust](#) – set up in 2008 to develop and shape the future of Northern Ireland’s voluntary and community sector;
- [Charities Evaluation Services](#) – leading provider of support and advice on quality evaluation systems for the voluntary sector;
- [Evaluation Support Scotland \(ESS\)](#) – works with voluntary organisations and funders so that they can measure and report on their impact and improve their services;
- [National Council of Voluntary Organisations \(NCVO\)](#) – is the largest umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England;
- [New Philanthropy Capital \(NPC\)](#) – is an independent think tank and consultancy to help charities and funders achieve greater impact; and
- [Substance](#) – is a social research co-operative working in the youth, sport and social development sector helping projects to improve and demonstrate their impact and value.

[Local Government Association](#) is a politically-led, cross-party membership organisation that works on behalf of councils to support, promote and improve local government.

[National Council for Voluntary Youth Services \(NCVYS\)](#) is a national independent body that represents voluntary and community youth organisations in England. NCVYS’ strategic aims are to champion the voluntary and community sector, help services for young people to become more effective and broker networks. NCVYS led the Catalyst Consortium, which ran from 2011-2013. NCVYS is one of three partners leading the Centre for Youth Impact.

[National Youth Agency \(NYA\)](#) is a national youth work charity in England, championing the role of youth workers, enabling youth workers to do what they do, better and helping to professionalise youth work. NYA was a partner organisation in the Catalyst Consortium.

[Nesta](#) is an independent charitable foundation that supports innovation in public services and civil society, helping individuals and organisations to design and develop better initiatives to improve the quality of many people’s lives.

[Project Oracle](#) is a children and youth evidence hub promoting the use of quality evidence of what works and supporting services to improve the delivery of youth programmes. Project Oracle is London based and is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Project Oracle is one of three partners leading the Centre for Youth Impact.

Regional Youth Work Units are youth work development agencies working with a network of providers, commissioners and young people. There are six regional units:

- [North West Regional Youth Work Unit \(NWRWU\)](#)

- [Youth Focus – North East](#) (formerly Regional Youth Work Unit – North East)
- [Learning South West – Regional Youth Work Unit \(SW RYWU\)](#)
- [Youth Work Unit – Yorkshire and The Humber](#)
- [Youth Focus – West Midlands](#) (formerly Youth Work Unit – West Midlands)
- [Partnership for Young London \(PYL\)](#)

More information on the [Network of Regional Youth Work Units](#)

[The Social Innovation Partnership \(TSIP\)](#) is an advisory social business that aims to combine academic research with strategy and delivery support for providers, funders and commissioners of social programmes to embed evidence and innovation.

[The Social Research Unit at Dartington](#) is an independent charity, which seeks to increase the use of evidence of what works in the design and delivery of services for children, young people and their families. The Social Research Unit is one of three partners leading the Centre for Youth Impact.

[The Young Foundation](#) is an independent centre for social innovation, creating new movements, institutions and companies that tackle the structural causes of inequality.

Resources

Building Your Measurement Framework: NPC's Four Pillar Approach <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/npcs-four-pillar-approach/>

Blueprint for Shared Measurement <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/blueprint-for-shared-measurement/>

Capturing the Evidence: Tools and processes for recognising and recording [paid for e-publication] <http://www.nya.org.uk/resource/capturing-evidence-tools-processes-recognising-recording/>

Code of Good Practice <http://inspiringimpact.org/resources/are-you-leading-for-impact/>

Commissioning for Outcomes and Co-Production <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/commissioning-for-outcomes-co-production>

Design & Refine: Developing effective interventions for children and young people <http://dartington.org.uk/design-and-refine/>

The Future for Outcomes, a practical guide to measuring young outcomes for young people <http://www.nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Future-for-Outcomes-Guide1.pdf>

Funders' Principles and Drivers of Good Impact Practice <http://inspiringimpact.org/resources/resources-funders-commissioners-and-investors/>

Impact Measurement in the NEETs Sector <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/impact-measurement-in-the-neets-sector-2/>

Inspiring Impact – Measuring Up! <http://inspiringimpact.org/measuringup/>

Inspiring Impact Hub <http://inspiringimpact.org/listings/>

Noticing the Change: A framework of outcomes for young people in practice <http://youngfoundation.org/publications/noticing-the-change-a-framework-of-outcomes-for-young-people-in-practice/>

Charities Evaluation Services (CES) Resource Guide: Evaluating Outcomes and Impact <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/Resources/CharitiesEvaluationServices/Documents/The%20CES%20Resource%20Guide%20Evaluating%20Outcomes%20and%20Impact.pdf>

Realising Ambition – One of six webinars developed for the Big Lottery Fund project on developing a logic model or theory of change <http://dartington.org.uk/realising-ambition-webinar-3-developing-a-logic-model-or-theory-of-change/>

Scoping a Quality Framework for Youth Social Action <http://youngfoundation.org/publications/scoping-a-quality-framework-for-youth-social-action/>

Theory of Change: The beginning of making a difference <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/theory-of-change/>

Youth Report <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/project/youth-report>

Glossary

Beneficiaries – Those who will benefit from the impact of the initiative: the young people engaged in the initiative are the primary beneficiaries, while secondary beneficiaries include parents, family, teachers, employers and potentially the wider community.

Commissioners – We will collectively refer to central government, local authorities, public bodies and independent funders as ‘commissioners’, for ease. Commissioners may also be providers, for example a local authority that is funded to deliver a youth social action initiative.

Evaluation – The use of information from monitoring and elsewhere to judge and understand the performance of an organisation or initiative.

Impact – The broad and/or long-term effects of an initiative’s or organisation’s activities, outputs and outcomes, after taking into consideration an estimate of what would likely have happened in the absence of the initiative.

Indicators – A measure, which allows progress towards a goal to be tracked. For example, an initiative seeking to reduce young people’s risk of offending might use their attainment at school as an indicator.

Initiative – We will refer to a service, intervention, project or programmes as an ‘initiative’, for ease. These can include initiatives delivered or commissioned by a local authority, voluntary, charitable or social enterprise organisation or private business. Although their individual aims

and delivery will differ, they will intend to support or develop skills in a young person with particular beneficial outcomes in mind. They could be delivered in the community, schools, work place, and in combination with other services. When speaking about the collective range of initiatives delivered by the youth sector, we will refer to these as youth services.

Input – All the resources needed to carry out the activities of an initiative. For example finance, staff, equipment and facilities

Monitoring – Collecting and recording information in a routine and systematic way to check progress against plans and generate the information needed for evaluation.

Outcome – The change, benefit, learning or effect that can be linked to an organisation’s initiative.

Intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes – Intrinsic outcomes are internal to the individual achieving them. Examples of intrinsic outcomes include a person’s confidence and resilience.

Extrinsic outcomes are not part of the ‘internal balance’ of the person achieving them. Examples of an extrinsic outcome include securing employment or returning to education.

Short, intermediate and long-term outcomes – Short, intermediate and long-term outcomes are often categorised in relation to the stage at which they are achieved and are not fixed to a particular

length of time, but can be proportional to the length of the initiative. For example, the same programme for excluded young people might have:

- A short-term outcome of building trust with their provider;
- An intermediate outcome of gaining a sense of enjoyment of learning; and
- A long-term outcome of improved academic attainment, which may not be measurable until after the programme, for example GCSE exam results.

Outcomes may also be referred to as **hard and soft**. Hard outcomes have traditionally been thought of as those which can be measured, for example increases in academic attainment or remaining in employment. Soft outcomes have traditionally been considered those intangible changes which are difficult to measure robustly, for example resilience and self-direction. However, as measurement tools continue to be developed to include elements of psychometric testing and measures for wellbeing and mental toughness, the use of this distinction is being reconsidered.

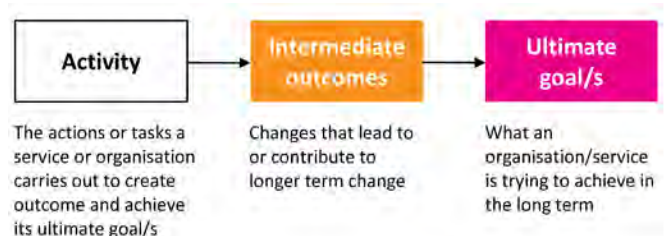
We will refer to intrinsic and extrinsic, and short, intermediate and long-term outcomes by these specific terms, where appropriate.

Outcomes framework – An outcomes framework is a structure, often displayed in a table or short document, to help you define the most important outcomes, which might be achieved from an initiative or programme of initiatives, linking them with supporting research.

Output – Products, services or facilities that result from an organisation’s activities. For example, events, number of young people engaged, number of hours of provision delivered.

Providers – We will refer collectively to youth workers, service deliverers, mentors and delivery managers in VCSE, public and private sector organisations as ‘providers’, for ease.

Theory of change – A theory of how or why an initiative works. Often displayed as a flow chart, a theory of change sets out the activities which will be delivered and how the short-term outcomes are expected to result in the longer-term outcomes. Because it is a theory, it will also detail assumptions that need to be made for it to move from the activities to the end outcomes. Inspiring Impact summarises the key features of a theory of change as:



A theory of change is sometimes referred to as a **logic model**. Logic models usually set out the inputs, planned activities, outputs and intended outcomes of an initiative in a logical table, however, they tend to make less reference to the theory or assumptions which are being made for the links between activities and outcomes.