



Outcomes – what are they?

Who we are

The Funders' Forum Frontline grew out of the Scotland Funders' Forum - a chief executive group which brings together the widest ever grouping of private and public funding agencies in the country to share information, learning and best practice.

The Funders' Forum Frontline was set up in 2006 and is made up of representatives who operate at the "funding coalface" and we work on practical ways to improve the funding landscape for funders and applicants alike. Membership of the group includes a wide range of Scottish funding bodies including the Big Lottery Fund, Comic Relief, Heritage Lottery Fund, Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, Robertson Trust, Scottish Community Foundation, Scottish Government, Robertson Trust and Voluntary Action Fund.

Why this help note?

The Funders' Forum Frontline members are often asked by potential grant applicants what types of outcomes we would consider funding and how to describe their outcomes.

Some of our members already publicise the very specific outcomes they are seeking to achieve through their grantmaking. Others have set broader outcomes and are happy to fund work that will contribute in some way to these higher level changes. Often as funders we find that the simpler the description of the outcome, the easier it is to understand. We would encourage applicants not to feel under pressure to overcomplicate things or feel they have to use buzz words.

So what is an outcome?

An outcome is a positive change, the difference you are making as a result of your work. One way to think about it is not '**what** you do' but '**why** are you doing it?'.

Here are some real life examples of planned outcomes from projects currently being funded by Funders' Forum Frontline members.

Work with children and young people

Young people will be able to make more positive choices on issues which affect their lives such as alcohol, drugs, healthy eating and sexual health.

Children's social and language skills and physical development will be increased by learning via play.

Children's feelings of isolation, fear and anxiety about hospital and treatments will be reduced.

Children and young people will have a greater sense of self-worth and be more confident in their outlook.

Improve children's understanding and respect for people from different cultures, backgrounds and ability.

Mental Health

To increase the confidence and self-esteem of volunteers with mental health problems.

Young people will reduce their use of harmful coping mechanisms.

Health

People with a brain injury, carers and professionals will be better informed about brain injury and the ways to cope with its effects.

Work addressing poverty and disadvantage

Disadvantaged young people make a positive transition to independent adulthood and have increased employment opportunities (we'll achieve this by establishing an Enterprise Hub and Cafe to provide support and training to 50 disadvantaged young people).

Work supporting local communities

Build positive relationships by increasing the number of young people involved in decision making, both about themselves and more widely about services and communities.

To increase understanding, exchange, and integration between people of all cultures, faiths and backgrounds.

The newsletter will enable the community to stay informed and participate in the decisions that are being made about the regeneration of the estate and local area.

Work with older people

60 older people will improve their health and wellbeing and reduce their levels of social isolation (by taking part in weekly activities and volunteering).

Reduce the isolation experienced by people with dementia living in their own home.

Describing your own outcomes

In all cases, these outcomes have been defined by applicants themselves. We hope that seeing a range of live examples will help you define and describe your own outcomes.

One helpful way to check whether you described an outcome or an activity is to ask “does it answer the ‘so what’ question?” e.g. “I trained 50 young people. So what? Young people increased their employability skills.” (The latter is an outcome, the first is an activity).

Measuring progress

You will also need to think about how you will measure progress towards achieving your planned outcomes.

Think about what the outcome will look like if it happens. Think about the specific things you can count, measure or record that will give you the evidence that outcomes are happening or not and whether you are on track. Do you already collect this information or will you need to set up a system to do so?

For example:

- *Number of older people who feel they have more contact with other people*
- *Percentage of refugees saying they feel part of the community*
- *Ability of young people with mental health problems to speak about their needs and how they feel.*
- *Number of young people reporting reduced alcohol consumption*

For more help

The charity Evaluation Support Scotland offers a series of free downloadable help sheets that you may find useful. It also runs training across Scotland.

Triangle Consulting has produced a number of free outcomes stars, tools to help capture and measure your outcomes. Some are for specific types of work e.g. homelessness. The Big Lottery Fund has supported the development of the outcomes star website.

www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk
www.outcomesstar.org.uk