

VCSE Skills and Information Workshops – Victims’ Services

Guide to Cope and Recover Outcomes

This resource complements a series of Skills and Information workshops that Pulse Regeneration has been contracted to deliver by the Ministry of Justice to providers in the VCSE sector that deliver victims’ support services.

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Guide to Cope and Recover Outcomes

Outcome Based Commissioning

The Ministry of Justice “Victims’ Services Commissioning Framework” (Published May 2013) is designed to help commissioners of victims’ services understand the evolving commissioning landscape. The Framework provides advice but does not act as mandatory guidance, rather it promotes a shared commissioning language to support delivery of the best possible outcomes for victims of crime.

Rather than measure success against factors such as how many victims have been contacted or referred for assessment, success will be based on how a service has supported a victim and the results of that support. To this end the Framework focuses on outcome based commissioning in being more effective in supporting victims, as measuring outputs on their own fails to take account of the wider benefits of a service to a victim.

In essence, outcome based commissioning is about defining and establishing the outcomes which can be achieved in order for victims of crime to return, in some way, to the life they had before the crime took place.

Outcomes Versus Outputs

Given the importance of outcomes it is helpful to understand the difference between outcomes and outputs.

- **Outcomes:** The Framework states that outcomes may be described as “the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of services and activities provided by an organisation which result in a sustainable change in user behaviour, condition and/or satisfaction”. Outcomes are often hard to quantify, and often rely on an understanding of the initial situation in order to evidence a comparison.

For example the outcomes from a support service for victims of crime may include improved confidence in accessing services and increased feelings of safety.

- **Outputs:** These are generally taken as tangible products, services or facilities created by services and activities provided by an organisation. They are usually easily quantified, and generally do not require an understanding of the initial situation.

For example the outputs from a support service for victims of crime may include supporting 25 people a quarter and providing 500 hours of one-to-one assistance.

Cope and Recover Outcomes

Under the Framework's outcome based commissioning approach, providers are expected to achieve two outcomes as set out in the Government consultation "Getting it right for victims and witnesses", being cope and recover:

1. Supporting victims to '**cope**' with the immediate impacts of crime, and;
2. '**Recover**' from the harm experienced (acknowledging that not all victims will return entirely to the lives they had before)

As a result of this, service providers will be expected to demonstrate that the service they are providing is of good quality and achieving the desired outcomes. It is open to commissioners to consider further outcomes in addition to cope and recover if appropriate.

Furthermore, providers will be monitored against the extent to which they achieve the outcomes.

Outcomes Measurement

The Framework acknowledges that there is little advice or information about outcome measurement aimed specifically at the delivery of those services supporting victims of crime.

Research commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and carried out by the National Centre for Social Research presented in the Evidence and Practice Review of support for victims and outcome measurement (Callanan et al., 2012a) and associated resource (Callanan, Turley, Brown and Kenny, 2012b) reviewed the existing evidence and practice surrounding victims' service needs, outcome measurement and quality assurance in the victim's services sector.

The review indicated that some providers have invested considerable time and resources in the development and implementation of outcome focused approaches, whilst others have not considered outcome measurement in detail.

A resource has been developed from the findings of the Evidence and Practice Review to provide support and information to service providers, commissioners and stakeholders in adopting an outcome-focused approach. It is a 10-step process covering designing the outcome measurement approach, implementing it, making use of the outcome data, and reviewing the outcome measurement approach. The process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-and-practice-review-of-support-for-victims-and-outcome-measurement>

Top Tips for Outcome Setting and Measurement

1. Wherever possible work with commissioners to identify and set outcomes given your knowledge of service users' needs
2. Align service delivery with the commissioners' required outcomes, focusing on cope and recover
3. Develop a suitable data collection and monitoring system from the outset
4. Understand the data you will need to draw on when evidencing your outcomes
5. Work with stakeholders, including service users, throughout to gather and interpret data
6. Feedback to the commissioner when, and how, required
7. Consider how you may use the data to improve your own future delivery
8. Consider how you may use the data to inform the commissioner's future service requirements
9. Use the outcome findings as an evidence base to promote your organisation where possible