Outcomes Framework – Glossary

There are multiple terms referred to when discussing outcomes frameworks, both those generally related to evaluation and outcomes, and those more particular to Barnardo's. For reference, a set of agreed definitions for many of these are below.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of a project or service. It involves systematically gathering and analysing data / information on project to determine if the project achieved its objectives.

Outcome / Impact

An outcome is a consequence of something that happens because of something else. This can include positive and negative changes, whether intended or unintended. We consider "impact" to be the long-term effects, that is, the long-term outcome of something, in our context.

Outcome Domain

An outcome domain is a broad category into which multiple related outcomes can fall. Domains are a term and concept that are used in creating outcomes frameworks. The domains themselves do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Happy

We understand 'happy' in the context of our framework to mean that children grow up feeling a sense of belonging and well-being.

Healthy

We understand 'healthy in the context of our framework to mean that children growing up with disadvantage enjoy the same good health as their peers.

Hopeful

We understand 'hopeful' in the context of our framework to mean that children experiencing early childhood challenges can move on with their lives and into adulthood with hope and confidence.

Safe

We understand 'safe' in the context of our framework to mean that children at risk of harm are better protected by those with a duty of care.

Outcome Framework

An outcome framework is a set of outcomes used to promote consistency of measurement. These outcomes may be mapped against stakeholder group,

domain, or organisational goal. Outcome frameworks are generally produced to help one or more organisations be consistent in their reporting of outcomes. Our Barnardo's Outcomes Framework includes measures for each domain.

Indicator / Metric
A standalone measure provides information on how much of an outcome has happened or is expected to happen. These can be based on information provided by those experiencing the outcome (for example, using questionnaires or scales) or from other sources (for example, employment statistics). Standalone measures are those which have been published independently of an outcome framework. Standalone measures can be objective or subjective.

Subjective
Subjective measures are outcomes that are less easy to observe or measure, often because they relate to the 'internal balance' of a person: a change in attitude, confidence, or self-control. These are often measures of how people feel – for example, loneliness is a subjective measure of how alone someone feels.

Objective
An objective measure is an easily measured, externally verifiable outcome that usually has higher consistency in measurement as it is less subject to a person's internal balance. These are often things that can be measured without knowing how someone might feel, for example isolation is a measure of the number of times someone is in contact with others over a particular period.

Tool
A tool is a platform or resource designed to support outcomes data collection or analysis. This could be further defined as tools that do the following:

a) provide the ability to collect information directly from stakeholders
b) provide benchmark information
c) store, visualise and analyse impact data
d) case management systems
e) diagnostic self-assessments.

Beneficiary
The intended recipients of an outcome. Beneficiaries are a sub-group of stakeholders.

Validated
A measure is validated when it has undergone a process of verification or testing to determine its accuracy. Validation may be undertaken by the original authors/publishers as part of the development of a measure or conducted later by a third party.