Wider outcomes

Planning and capture tool

Guidance document

niace

promoting adult learning

Contents

About the tool

'The impact of adult education is messy, irregular and very personal. Our challenge is how we document this impact in a clear and systematic way that meets the needs of decision makers in these challenging times.'

David Hughes, Chief Executive, NIACE

This tool has been developed to support learning providers to recognise and capture the wider outcomes of adult learning. It has been designed to be user-friendly and is based on NIACE's detailed national research.

Why use the tool?

Wider outcomes are becoming increasingly significant in the measuring of impact and commissioning of services. This tool gives learning providers a focused and consistent way of planning and capturing the outcomes. It is not constrictive and is designed to be flexible to meet local needs and circumstances.

NIACE is encouraging and supporting learning providers to use the tool and build it into their practice in order to develop a substantial, coherent national evidence base.

On a local level, it will support providers to demonstrate the difference they make across a range of agendas and can supplement existing quality improvement arrangements.

How to use the tool

Column 1: Outcome category (broad area of change)

This column shows the broad areas of change for which the wider outcomes are being tracked, in addition to the learning outcomes. It is important to still track the learning outcomes as well.

The areas of change are as follows. Select the one(s) that are most relevant to the programme that you are considering.

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Family relationships
- Other social relationships
- Volunteering
- Employment/employability
- Learning
- Agency
- Other: changes for individuals; changes for community; changes for organisation

Column 2: Who changes? (brief description of group of stakeholders)

In this column, provide a brief description of the group that experiences change as a result of the activity. For example:

- Older learners, aged 75+
- Young parents
- Unemployed adults
- Female ex-offenders
- Families

Column 3: How do they change?

It is important to understand what changes. This change might be positive or negative; it might be intended or unintended.

See Appendix 1 for a list of examples of changes under each outcome category. This list is not exhaustive and other changes may occur on your project.

Column 4: Tools/methods to capture

This is where you consider the best way to collect information from your stakeholders. This can be quantitative (can be counted or measured) and/or qualitative (in-depth and descriptive). An important part of the process is to decide exactly what you are going to measure and what the indicators will be to show that you have captured the amount of change. This will dictate the tools that you use.

Some examples of methods include:

- Surveys
- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Discussion groups
- Learner diaries
- Individual learning plans

It is helpful to use a combination of methods if possible. This will strengthen your evidence base and support your judgements on the amount of change that has taken place.

Column 5: Number (where relevant)

This column allows you to predict the number of learners that this change may apply to and record the number of learners that actually changed.
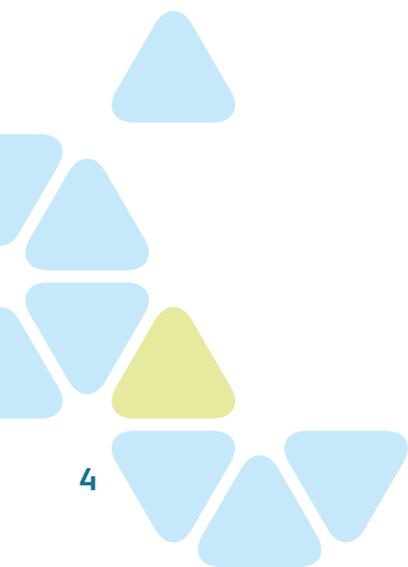
Column 6: Evidence of change (how do we know?)

This is where you show the amount of change that has taken place. Here are a couple of examples:

- If the outcome is 'better able to manage physical health', the evidence of change might be learners reporting improved management of medication and less reliance on family members.

- If the outcome is 'reduced anxiety and stress', the evidence of change might be that learners show improvement on a scale such as the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale.

Appendix 1

Wider outcomes framework

Health

Physical health

- Increased/decreased physical stamina
- Improved/deteriorated physical health
- Better/less able to manage physical health
- Improved/worsened diet
- Increased/decreased physical activity

Mental health

- Improved/deteriorated mental health
- Improved/deteriorated mental well-being
- Reduced/increased anxiety and stress
- Reduced/increased incidents of depression
- Increased/decreased involvement in positive activities
- Less/more intervention from external agencies

Social relationships

Family relationships

- Improved/deteriorated family relationships
- Improvement/deterioration in family routine
- Strengthened/weakened bond between family members

Other social relationships

- Increased/decreased support through new relationships
- Improved/deteriorated existing relationships
- Increased/decreased contact with more diverse groups

Volunteering

- Increased/decreased interaction with community through volunteering
- Increased self-esteem through giving something back to society by volunteering
- Gaining/losing skills for work through volunteering
- Increased/decreased motivation and confidence to take up volunteering
- Newly engaged/disengaged with volunteering

Employment/employability

- Increased/decreased job satisfaction
- Gaining/losing job-related skills
- Utilising/under-utilising skills in the workplace
- Improved/deteriorated workplace communications
- Increased/decreased career opportunities
- Increased/decreased productivity
- Gaining/losing employment
- Increased/decreased motivation and confidence to seek employment

Learning

- Newly engaged/disengaged with education and training
- Moving/not moving on to further education or training
- Increased/decreased motivation and confidence to learn new skills

Agency

Agency is the capacity for someone to act independently and make their own choices. Outcomes in this category may include changes such as increased self-esteem, taking control of life and feeling included.

- Increased/decreased personal responsibility for lifestyle
- Increase/decrease in at-risk behaviour
- Increased/decreased ability to carry out day-to-day tasks independently
- Increased/decreased ability and resilience to cope with everyday situations
- Increased/decreased ability to contact appropriate professional agencies for help and/or advice
- Reduced/increased social isolation
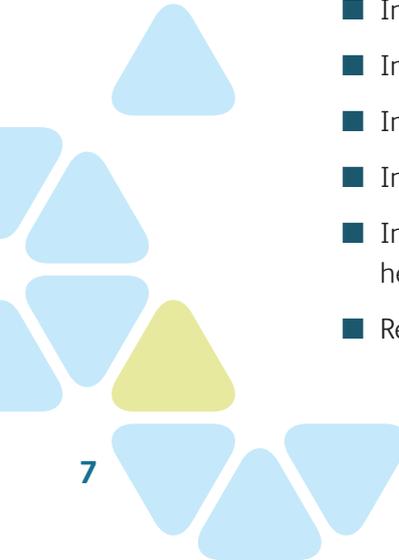
- More/less digitally included
- Improved/worsened financial capability
- Increased/decreased involvement in community life
- Increased/decreased access to community facilities
- Increase/decrease in communication skills
- Increased/decreased self-esteem
- Increased/decreased confidence to take part in…
- Increased/decreased sense of purpose to…
- Developing a broader identity through new activity
- Feeling more/less able to influence decision-makers and make a difference

Other

Changes for individuals

- Feeling more/less positive about local area
- Saving/losing money
- Less/more involvement with the criminal justice system
- Increased/decreased sustainability of housing

Changes for community

- More/less pleasant local environment
- Less/more anti-social behaviour
- Stronger/weaker links between different community groups
- Improved/worsened local services
- More/less local sustainability

Changes for organisation

- Increased/decreased ability to meet organisational objectives
- Increased/decreased positive publicity
- Increased/decreased uptake of services
- More/less effective partnership working
- Increased/decreased staff morale
- Improved/worsened service to clients
- Improved/worsened ways of working
- Reduced/increased costs

Appendix 2

Wider outcomes: Planning and capture tool

Brief description of learning programme/activity:

Outcome category*	Who changes?	How do they change?	Tools/methods to capture	Number (where relevant)		Evidence of change
(Broad area of change)	*(Brief description of group of stakeholders)*	*(Positive/negative, intended/unintended)*		*How many will change?*	*How many did change?*	*(How do we know?)*

*The outcome categories are: Physical health; Mental health; Family relationships; Other social relationships; Volunteering; Employment/ Employability; Learning; Agency; Other

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