

A Guide to Sharing Outcomes for Children and Young People in North Somerset

Version 17 – March 2021

Contents

North Somerset Joint Outcomes Framework – The Four Themes	3
Foreword	4
Part One – What does this mean for me?	6
The Joint Outcomes Framework Themes	6
What children and young people told us about outcomes	7
How can we improve how we all work together?	8
What will be different for children and parents?	9
Part Two – Shared Outcomes in North Somerset – A guide for working together	10
Why have a Framework? Quality, Consistency and Portability	10
Making the links	11
Quality – How do we write a good outcome?	12
Consistency – How do we write good outcomes for everyone?	13
Portability – How do we use outcomes to work together better?	15
How will using the Joint Outcomes Framework Themes inform our plans and strategies?	16

Figure 1 - North Somerset Joint Outcomes Framework – The Four Themes



Foreword

This document has been co-produced by families and professionals. It is a resource to support good practice in the development of writing effective outcomes in assessments and plans for children and young people with SEND. It aims to establish a shared focus on outcomes between children and young people, their families, and the early years settings, schools, colleges and health and care services that support them.

This Joint Outcomes Framework will serve as a 'golden thread' linking the elements of the local areas SEND system: from individual outcomes in Education Health and Care plans, through learning and care pathways, to the commissioning of services to support all children and young people with SEND. Working together in a joint framework will enable us to understand what works for children in North Somerset and to identify areas where we need to strengthen provision or find new ways of providing services. It will also allow us to plan for the future as we learn more about the emerging needs of children and young people.

In part one of this document, we describe the principles on which our Joint Outcomes Framework is based and how it might be used as a tool to tie together the services involved in the life of a child or young person with SEND. The second part of the document supports colleagues in all of our local services to write and monitor outcomes which will be clear to families, easily shared between services, and which will improve the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans. We have also produced a 'Two-Side Guide' which explains in plain language what this work is designed to achieve.

Ultimately, we want children and their parents to be able to move through our services seamlessly, using well-written outcomes as a *passport* to receive the support they need, while reducing the need to repeat their stories again and again.

This Framework is based on the Preparing for Adulthood Themes of Good Health, Employment, Independent Living and Community Inclusion; however, we have changed these titles slightly in consultation with parents, carers and professionals to ensure we can write clear, inclusive outcomes which mean something to everyone. The Framework also links to the Education Health and Care themes of Cognition and Learning, Communication, SEMH, and Physical and Sensory.

The Themes in the Framework are:

- **Independent Lives - Skills for Living and Independence**
- **Family, Friends and Community - Connecting with people around me**
- **Good Health and Wellbeing - Health and Wellbeing**
- **Learning, Employment and Positive Contribution - Learning and Achieving**

Although its focus is on children and young people with SEND, the Joint Outcomes Framework applies to all children and young people who reside in North Somerset. It is our view that every child should be considered an individual with their own aspirations, goals and needs. We must ensure that the support and interventions we commission and provide across the local area meet these needs effectively.

We are committed to periodic review of this framework, so we continue to drive the improvements needed and ensure that the needs of children and their families are met appropriately.

Councillor Catherine Gibbons

Executive Member for Children & Young People

Councillor Wendy Griggs

Chair of Children and Young People's Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Sheila Smith

Director of People & Communities
North Somerset Council

Lisa Manson

Director of Commissioning
Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire CCG

Lorraine McMullen

Associate Director of Children's Services
Sirona Care & Health

Mark Arruda-Bunker

Associate Director of Operations
Avon & Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust

Kenton Mee

Chief Executive Officer
North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together

Part One – What does this mean for me?

Everyone in North Somerset is committed to supporting children and young people to achieve their potential. We support children to do this by setting outcomes which are:

- Based first and foremost on children and young people's aspirations, and the aspirations their families have for them;
- Written in language which is clear and understandable;
- Linked by themes which help everyone to see how services and professionals can work together to achieve the best possible outcome;
- Easy to discuss with all professionals working with children and young people, whether they are familiar with their situation, or meeting them for the first time; and
- Written in children and young people's own words and in the first person whenever possible, to reflect their wishes and aspirations and encourage them to feel that plans are their own.

We believe that by having a Joint Outcomes Framework – an agreed way of setting, talking about and measuring outcomes across the local area, with children and families at the centre of the process – we can ensure that:

- We always set challenging outcomes which get the right support for children; and
- Everyone is focused on supporting these outcomes, even when multiple professionals are involved in service provision.

When we discuss outcomes in North Somerset we will always consider three key areas: **Quality**, **Consistency** and **Portability**.

- **Quality** – we will write outcomes which have clear expectations, timescales and measures of progress, while remaining mindful of the other pressures and expectations on children and their families.
- **Consistency** – we will write outcomes in plain, non-technical language and will review them regularly at annual reviews or similar meetings. We will include the voices of parents, children and professionals in reviews to ensure that we see the whole picture.
- **Portability** – all professionals will know the outcomes which children and young people are working toward and will understand their contribution to them. If a new professional begins working with a child or young person, they will understand what work is already in progress without needing to hear the whole story again.

The Joint Outcomes Framework Themes

Following work with children and young people, we have developed a framework of four themes which reflect the types of needs and support which are most often part of a plan or assessment. When each outcome agreed with a child or young person is connected with one or more of these themes, it will help everyone to see how professionals and services might need to work together to provide the right support in the context of the child's aspirations and goals. Using the Framework in conjunction with feedback on outcomes collected in periodic review processes, views of parents and carers and management information also provides a way for the local area to determine whether services are meeting children's needs across the whole system.

We have chosen the names for these themes in consultation with parents, carers, children and young people and professionals - and we have also asked children to tell us what the themes might mean to them too. The themes are broadly similar to existing areas of the Education Health and Care Plan and Pathways to Adulthood and will fit neatly with these documents when needed.

What children and young people told us about outcomes

We asked children and young people what kinds of aspirations, needs, and outcomes would fit under each of the four themes. This is what they said:

Theme 1: Independent Lives - Skills for Living and Independence

- I want to be able to do housework when I am older
- Feeling and keeping safe is very important to me
- I want to be able to cross the road
- I would like to be able to use buses and trains to go places
- I'd like to be able to cook, this would be fun
- I want to look for supported living when I leave college
- I want to volunteer in the community
- I would like help getting work experience
- I want to be paid to work
- I would like to work at Rolls Royce
- I want to be an LSA or a hairdresser
- To be able to walk to college next year
- I would like to get a part time job
- I would like to have a pet
- I often do housework and I enjoy it

Theme 2: Family, Friends and Community - Connecting with people around me

- I attend social clubs at the college at lunch and breakfast time
- I want to have confidence to meet new people
- I need help to go to clubs
- I want to be able to meet with professionals and tell them what I want and think
- I attend my EHCP meetings and people listen to me.
- I meet with my social worker to arrange transport sometimes
- I like connecting with my community
- I would like to complete my video games and attend gaming events
- I like to look at stars and planets with my family
- I enjoy going to youth club. My favourite part is cooking
- I want to be able to meet new friends

Theme 3: Good Health and Wellbeing - Health and Wellbeing

- I have been taught how to communicate well
- I like to use the gyms at Weston College, Priory and Worle School.
- I love going swimming with my family
- I get lots of help for my mental health at CAHMS
- I have a healthy diary where I write the food I eat and the exercise I do
- I go to the opticians and they are nice to me
- I go to wellbeing classes to talk about my mental health needs
- I love to dance. I dance every week and want to do competitions
- I like working with horses. I go to equine therapy
- I enjoy gardening and want to grow vegetables

Theme 4: Learning, Employment and Positive Contribution - Learning and Achieving

- I attend college
- I would like to learn to drive one day
- I want to work on buses when I am older
- I go to school and I love it
- I like to go to the campus library and do the reading challenges
- I like getting better at my hobbies. My mum makes certificates for me
- I want to help animals
- I would like to study astrophysics in a university in California
- I want to attend dance competitions

How can we improve how we all work together?

“We in North Somerset, working together as a local area, aspire for all children and young people with additional needs to achieve their full potential”

North Somerset Local Area SEND Strategy 2019 -2022

Professionals working with children and young people in North Somerset are part of a wider system which includes education, health, and social care services delivering support in line with national legislation and regulations. Local authorities have also set local priorities and strategies to ensure we respond to the needs of people living in North Somerset. This includes our SEND Strategy and our Joint Commissioning Plan.

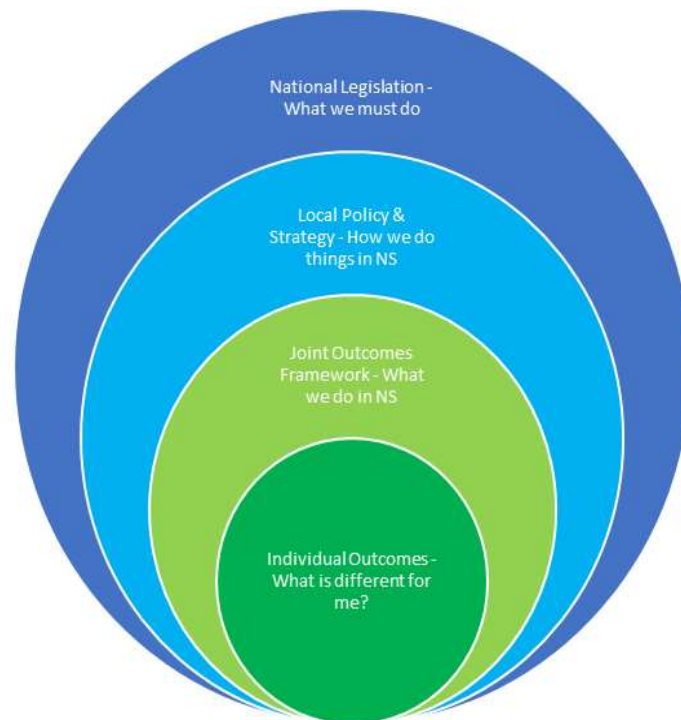


Figure 2 – The Outcomes ‘Onion’ – National, Local and Individual Planning

This system is sometimes complex, but we believe that parents should not have to navigate it without support and guidance. Our Joint Outcomes Framework is designed to ensure that the joined-up ways of working required by these laws, policies and strategies are reflected in the services which every child and their family receive in North Somerset.

What will be different for children and parents?

The Joint Outcomes Framework is designed to help children and their families understand how the support they receive from varied professionals and services is working together to help them reach their full potential. If the Framework is effective, children and their parents will be able to state that:

- I have a clear idea of what support is provided to me, but also what it is planned to change or improve for me;
- I am able to talk to all of the professionals involved in my life, and know that they all understand the services I am receiving;
- I am able to meet new professionals or work with new services, and to show them the plans and outcomes which I am working towards;
- Everyone working with me will be able to see how they can support me to achieve my outcomes, and to avoid accidentally making things more difficult or complicated for me.

Part 2 –Shared Outcomes in North Somerset – A guide for working together

This section is intended to support professionals in developing **quality, consistent and portable** outcomes which help everyone achieve the best possible results for children and young people in North Somerset. However, we encourage parents, carers and young people to read this section if they are curious about our ways of working.

All partners in North Somerset are committed, via our shared SEND Strategy and our co-production charter, to:

- Delivering personalised, integrated support which results in positive outcomes for children;
- Providing support which spans education, health and social care from birth through childhood and prepares young people for adult life; and
- Ensuring timely and effective planning for transition points such as between early years, school and college – including transitions between children’s and adults’ social care services or between paediatric and adult health services.

By working together in this way, we will ensure we are led by the individual child’s needs, with an eye toward helping them achieve their optimum independence.

Why have a Framework? Quality, Consistency and Portability

From the earliest stages of our engagement around the SEND Reforms, parents and carers told us that:

“individual professionals are generally really helpful and informative but if services communicated better we would not feel like we are repeating ourselves to the different professionals that we speak with”

Parent Consultation Session, 2014

Parents sometimes feel their child’s care plans are often ‘more about the service than their child,’ and although they value the support being provided they feel that ‘services need to work better together without us parents having to bridge the gap.’

We want children and their families to experience that, despite the complexities of the SEND system, we are working together to support them. We also want to ensure that by communicating effectively and sharing plans and assessments, parents do not need to be the ‘messengers’ between service providers.

Foundations for writing quality, consistent and portable outcomes

When working with children and their families, most practitioners use the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle to understand what each child’s needs are and how they may best be met. These needs are referred to in assessments, reviews and re-assessments. Assessments are often where a child first enters the system; that is, where it is formally identified that the child requires extra help and support in one or more areas of life.

When completing the assessment and planning service provision, it is helpful to make a clear link from children’s and families’ aspirations and needs, to SMART outcomes which detail the steps that will be taken to work toward the desired results.



Figure 3 – The ‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’ cycle as applied to an individual’s plan of care

Making the Links

Our Joint Outcomes Framework supports this process by 1) ensuring that all outcomes set by service providers are SMART outcomes, and 2) linking the outcomes to the four themes shared across our partnership. This ensures that we are always looking at the whole child in the context of their family, and that we are always considering the work other parts of the system are doing to support children and their families.

Advantages in collaborating via the Joint Outcomes Framework include:

- **Reducing duplication:** saving time and resources.
- **Improving the clarity of discussions:** helping children and parents to exercise choice and control, and supporting the links between home and school.
- **Clarifying roles and responsibilities:** eliminating buck-passing and blame between services, and supporting positive joint working.
- **Preventing unexpected issues:** where outcomes from different services may adversely impact each other.
- **Reducing the need to repeat stories:** by providing an overview of support but allowing professionals to delve into the detail they need.
- **Improving the Annual Review experience:** by providing a context for a concise review of the previous year and allowing more time to focus on future planning.

Quality – How do we write a good outcome?

What is an outcome?

The SEND Code of Practice says:

“An outcome can be defined as the benefit of difference made to an individual as a result of an intervention. It should be personal and not expressed from a service perspective; it should be something that those involved have control and influence over, and while it does not always have to be formal or accredited, it should be SMART.”

SEND Code of Practice 2015, Section 9.66

Why do we develop outcomes?

The purposes of setting outcomes are:

- To break down often-complex aspirations and needs into manageable steps;
- To ensure that we are providing or commissioning the right services to meet needs; and
- To enable us to measure progress and check that provision continues to meet needs.

From the child and family’s perspective, outcomes written this way will be easier to understand because they describe how the service provision will enable the child to achieve their outcomes; it is not a description of the service provision itself.

SMART outcomes

All quality outcomes should be SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bound. A SMART outcome is targeted to the individual and their unique abilities, and translates desired results into clear, manageable steps that can be periodically evaluated. If an outcome is SMART, it should be possible to tell whether or not it has been achieved and whether the child requires a new or revised outcome.



Figure 4 – The ‘SMART’ Approach to Outcomes and Goal-setting

Examples of good outcome practice

In the examples below, we have taken real outcomes that have appeared in North Somerset care plans and re-written them as SMART outcomes. Note that all of the revised outcomes:

- Are focused on Amil, not the service provision;
- Describe the expected result, rather than the provision which will be used to achieve it;
- Are written in clear, plain language; and
- Clearly identify where Amil's own words are being used by writing in the first person, which is a recommendation in the SEND Code of Practice.

Outcome	SMART Outcome
Be able to work with other students without adult support	By the age of 14, Amil will be able to work constructively on at least two shared activities with two other students for 30 minutes without adult support during each school day.
Have a small group of friends who he plays with at break times and take part in activities	When I'm 14, I will have at least two friends who I enjoy playing with at break times and I will try and take part in two school and two after-school activities weekly.
To improve his diet and increase exercise by taking part in more physical activity	When I'm 14, I want to be able to identify 2-3 healthy, yummy food options and take part in two after-school activity clubs. One of these will be doing a physical activity every week.
To improve communication skills so that Amil can make friends	By the end of this year, Amil will be able to start a conversation with a peer in a structured situation with adult support once a day, so that he can practice listening to and communicating with other people in his age group.
Amil to have a free choice of foods and the amounts he wants to eat	By the end of this school term, Amil will be selecting each day's lunch from a carefully selected menu so that he can have tasty, nutritious food to satisfy his appetite and reduce his need to snack on high calorie/high fat foods.

Summary

Remember that outcomes:

- Should always be SMART;
- Should be written in the child's own words whenever possible;
- Should reflect the views of children, parents and carers;
- Should be developed from an aspiration or need, not led by a service or process;
- Should be written in clear language that everyone can understand;
- Should describe **what will change or improve**, not the services which will be provided;
- Should enable different professionals to work jointly with the child, especially when complex needs have been identified.

Consistency – How do we write good outcomes for everyone?

If service providers across the Local Area follow a consistent approach when developing outcomes with children and young people and their families, we can build a common understanding of the child's needs and the outcomes which will support their development.

Ultimately, this will enable us to ensure that the appropriate services and support are provided, and to evaluate the individual and overall impact of our services.

The Joint Outcomes Framework promotes consistency by:

- Improving communication between all parties, because outcomes will be expressed in clear, understandable language;
- Reducing parents' concerns that they must 'bridge the gap' between services, because outcomes will be easy to share with other services and easy for those services to understand;
- Demonstrating that many (but not all) outcomes are naturally linked; and
- Increasing the likelihood that children's time spent in educational settings, in therapies, or in other provisions has an impact on their progress, independence or wellbeing because the provision links to their aspirations whenever possible.



Figure 4 – The Continuum of Aspirations, Needs, Outcomes and Provision

The **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle provides opportunities for children and families to discuss their **Aspirations** and **Needs** with their service provider, and to agree the **Outcomes** required to support their achievement. Then, the service provider can discuss what **Provision** may be appropriate to support the agreed outcomes. By following this approach consistently across the Local Area, it will help create a culture that is 'Person-Centred', not provision-led; the service provision will be tied to an actual aspiration or need of the individual using it.

Summary

Remember that consistent outcomes:

- Are linked to our Joint Outcomes Framework, to enable everyone to see how they link with other provision, and other outcomes
- Allow everyone involved in a child's care to view outcomes agreed with various service providers as part of a whole system supporting the child's well-being;
- Promote a 'Person-Centred' culture, connecting service provision to real aspirations and needs of the child or young person using the service; and
- Facilitate an experience that, from the child and family's perspective, feels more unified and reduces anxieties that they will have to 'bridge the gaps' on their own.

Portability – How do we use outcomes to work together better?

Writing outcomes which avoid duplication can save time and resources, and provides a simpler, clearer experience for children, families and professionals. Parents tell us that each encounter with a new service or professional often requires them to re-tell their entire history. A key aim of the Joint Outcomes Framework is to provide an approach to gathering information at the very start of a family's journey through the local area system that can be built upon as their journey continues. Use of SMART outcomes tied to the four themes in the Framework will allow families and all services with which they are involved to monitor and support progress collectively, because everyone should be able to understand **quickly** what is being done with whom. Use of Framework-tied SMART outcomes across the Local Area also has the potential to develop into a future 'care passport', as better technology is integrated into daily practice.

Reviews

Any care plan must be regularly monitored and reviewed. Monitoring provides the opportunity to discuss progress with the child, family and professionals involved in the child's care, and identify early any changes in the child's needs. This may result in an outcome being refined to be SMARTer, and/or new outcomes being agreed to encourage further progress.

By reflecting on outcomes during reviews, it is possible to:

- Determine how well provision is meeting needs;
- Understand children's and families' views and feelings about the support they receive;
- Identify unmet needs or gaps in provision;
- Recognise opportunities for improved joint working; and
- Provide an opportunity to celebrate progress, and plan for the future.

This may be at the following meetings:

- Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan annual reviews
- Individualised Education Plan (IEP) meetings
- Individualised Behaviour Plan (IBP) meetings
- Team around the Child/Family meetings (Early Help, Targeted Family Support)
- Child Protection Review meetings
- Children in Need meetings
- Child in Care meetings
- Short Breaks reviews

Transitions

The SEND Code of Practice states that the local authority "*should develop a shared vision and strategy which focuses on aspirations and outcomes, using information from EHC plans and other planning to anticipate the needs of children and young people with SEN and ensure there are pathways into employment, independent living, participation in society and good health.*"

SEND Code of Practice 2015, Section 8.1

Our Joint Outcomes Framework is based on the Preparing for Adulthood themes as these must be incorporated into EHCPs from Year 9, or earlier if possible.

How will using the Joint Outcomes Framework inform our plans and strategies?

Linking our work to the four themes and writing SMART outcomes which are shared across plans and provision, will allow service leaders and directors across the Local Area to make better-informed decisions about any changes that will affect the SEND system in North Somerset.

Each year, the SEND Programme Board, which oversees SEND support for children and young people in the Local Area, completes a Self-Evaluation exercise to evaluate how well things are working, and to decide what areas to focus on over the next year. Using Framework-tied SMART outcomes across the Local Area means that the outcomes we are writing have the potential to be collated into data that will:

- Provide strategic leaders with the information to understand what is working well or not;
- Allow them to identify trends and develop projections to support effective planning of future services; and
- Ensure the best use of resources, so we can deliver the interventions and support which are most likely to have a positive impact on children's lives.

Looking at this data in the context of an Area-wide '**Assess, Plan, Do, Review**' cycle will enable strategic leaders to:

Look at the individual in the context of the system

- Is it supporting them to achieve what they aspire to?
- Is it realising the benefits intended for each child?
- Are we working together effectively to meet each child's needs?
- Are parents able to tell their story once and build on it, rather than repeating the same things over and over?

Look at the system in the context of the individual

- Are we commissioning or providing the right mix of services to meet the needs we find across all children?
- Are there areas we need to develop to better support children?
- Are there things we are collectively doing which create barriers or blockages?



Figure 5 – The 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle as applied to the Local Area system

Summary

Remember that portable outcomes:

- Support the delivery of high-quality Annual Reviews;
- Provide a more rounded view of a child's life in other meetings and assessments, even when they have a specific education or health focus;
- Assist in moving children and young people along the pathway to adulthood;
- Support an understanding of service performance, developing commissioners' understanding of unmet need and helping strategic managers to see the individual within the system; and
- Help deliver a system of support which is holistic, rather than fragmented.