measuring change

Co-operation and Working Together:
Capturing outcomes in a community health setting

This case study illustrates how *Measuring Change* was used to help identify, capture and report on the qualitative outcomes from CAWT's 'Older People's Social Support Project'. This provided a means of exploring some of the project's 'hard to measure' outcomes and supplemented existing data-collection processes.

In 2012, CENI met with representatives from the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency to discuss the potential application of the *Measuring Change* approach in a community health setting. Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) was identified to provide a pilot.

CAWT is an organisation which promotes cross-border co-operation in health and social care. It delivers a number of North/South collaborative projects in conjunction with partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. One of these is the 'Older People's Project', a three-year initiative which aims to *'reduce social isolation among older people to enable them to live independently in their own home for as long as possible'*.

The CAWT team had developed an 'Evaluation Framework' identifying a number of indicators of change and data collection methods to be used to capture outcomes from the Older People's Project. However, it was recognised that some of the outcomes were 'hard to measure' and that there was a need to find a way of generating information about these.

To address this need, *Measuring Change* was applied to the Social Support strand of the project's work in one particular area (Armagh).

How was *Measuring Change* used?

1 Defining change

The focus of the Armagh Older People's project is on providing information and greater access to social support services through improved referral processes and better collaboration across providers. Key to this has been the reshaping of services and development of new models of working.

Drawing on internal documentation and consultation with CAWT's core team, an outcomes framework was developed which reflected this focus and included changes at four levels - **people**, **community**, **organisational** and **relationships**.

Theme	Outcomes
People-based change	Enhanced capacity and development of older people
	Improved personal independence of older people
	Improved physical health and well-being of older people
	Carers have improved quality of life
	Older people feel safer and more secure in their home
	Engaging 'hard to reach' older people
	Reduced isolation and loneliness of older people
	Older people benefit from engaging in volunteering
Community-based change	Older people and carers have improved access to services
	Groups are strengthened to support older people
	Older people feel safer in the community
Organisational-based change	Improved interagency collaboration and co-ordination
	Practice development through joint working
	Strategic influence of the project
Relationship-based change	Bonding within the community
	Bridging with other communities
	Linking with decision makers

2 Capturing change

A 'stakeholder panel' was established, representing a range of perspectives on the project - project managers and staff, representatives from the voluntary, community and statutory sectors and user groups. CENI facilitated the panel to come to a collective agreement and score against each of the outcomes in terms of priority, difficulty, baseline and change.

3 Showing Change

The data was analysed and the results were presented in a report to CAWT. This included analysis of the numeric 'scores' against each of the outcomes as well as the narrative which had informed the score. It illustrated:

— The strong level of consensus amongst stakeholders about the priorities for the Social Support strand of the Older People's Project in Armagh – in particular, in relation to the people-centred focus of the work;

— The level of difficulty in achieving the outcomes and some of the challenges encountered;

— The baseline for each of the outcomes and the factors which had impacted upon this;

— The progress which had been made by the project in achieving its outcomes.

How did *Measuring Change* help?

— Provided a means of identifying a manageable set of 'hard to measure' outcomes

— Reflected not only the people-centred focus of the project, but some of the wider aspects of its work including organisational changes for the agencies involved

— Enabled stakeholders - some of whom had not met - to reflect collectively on progress in a structured way

— Generated information which can be used to support other monitoring and evaluation processes

— Has the potential to help inform planning, review and reporting within other strands of CAWT's work.

Some feedback from participants...

'A well-worthwhile exercise'

'Helps to see where we've come from and where we're going to'

'Good to review where we're at'

'The interagency involvement meant that we were bringing very different perspectives'

'Good to see varying perspectives in the room and hear from others involved ... people think in different ways about things'

"I found the Measuring Change approach excellent in evaluating qualitative outcomes which are sometimes difficult to capture".

Brenda Toal, Southern Health and Social Care Trust

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supporting and measuring change