



## **Develop outcomes by starting with aspirations**

*This section follows on from section 7.1 of The Preparing for Adulthood Review: A good practice toolkit. It provides more information on developing outcomes and shares some examples.*

### **What is an outcome?**

There is much debate and sometimes confusion about what we mean by an outcome. Here are some dictionary definitions of the word outcome:

- A final product or end result, a consequence;
- A conclusion reached through a process of logical thinking;
- Something that results from an action;

Sometimes there is confusion between aspirations and outcomes. Aspirations describe where a young person wants their life to be in the long term. For example, living in their own flat, having a job and going out with friends. Outcomes describe the specific things that the young person will do over a 2-3 year period to help them achieve their long term aspirations: for example, trying out different types of job to help them decide what work they would like in the future.

The SEND Code of Practice describes outcomes in the following way:

"An outcome can be defined as the benefit or difference made to an individual as a result of an intervention" (Section 9.66)

A good outcome can be described as:

- Building on something that is working well;
- Changing something that doesn't work well;
- Moving the young person towards their future aspirations.

If the outcome being considered doesn't address any of these issues, then it probably isn't a good outcome.

A person-centred outcome can be described as:

- Being expressed from a personal perspective, not a service perspective;
- Within the control and influence of the young person and/or those involved;
- Specific to the young person and measurable;

## What mistakes do we make with developing outcomes?

Apart from confusing outcomes with aspirations, there are two further common mistakes often made when developing outcomes. They are:

- Not being specific enough to be able to measure whether it has been successfully achieved
- Embedding the solution or provision into the outcome

Not being specific enough - If an outcome is not specific enough it becomes really hard to measure whether it has been achieved and has made a difference in the young person's life. For example, "To improve my fitness and stamina". This outcome statement is not specific to the individual and we have no way of measuring if it has been achieved. We don't know what to be fit looks or feels like to this person, or what is important to them about improving their fitness and stamina. We need to get clear and specific by asking some questions.

Embedding the solution - Often you will see outcomes that describe the solution for achieving the outcome as part of the outcome, or they are describing the provision that will help the outcome be achieved.

A solution is the resource (provision) that you need to achieve the outcome. It can be an item or an activity and it may have a cost attached to it or may be free.

In the process below you can see some tools to help you explore whether the outcomes you are developing have the solution embedded in them.

### Solutions and outcomes – things to consider

Confusing solutions with outcomes shuts out alternative possibilities and other solutions too early. For example:

*"To have 3 hours of speech and language therapy every week"* may be a solution, but we don't really know what the young person wants to achieve with it, or whether speech and language therapy is the best way or only way to help them achieve that.

To test if you really have articulated an outcome, there are a number of questions that can be asked to help clarify the outcome. When you get to the point where you lose clarity and start talking about overarching aspirations, you need to focus back down to the last clear point you reached. Using the example of speech and language therapy:

- **What would it give the young person?** *Time with a speech therapist*
- **What would it do for the young person?** *Help them be more easily understood by their friends when they are playing?*
- **What would it make possible for the young person?** *Friendships, taking part in things, feeling more confident with other young people.*

You can then take this information and develop a more detailed and specific outcome. For example:

**“I am understood by my friends and I can play with them in the playground and at the after school club every day”**

### Checking the outcomes before looking at provision options

After all of the outcomes have been agreed it is important to stop and check them.

Here are the questions to use to check that the outcomes will make the difference required in the young person’s life:

#### Do the outcomes:

- prepare the young person for adulthood by making it more likely that they have paid work, independent living, have friends, relationships, be part of their community life, and be healthy?
- address the young person’s needs?
- reflect what is important to the young person?
- help to change what is not working?
- take the young person closer to their aspirations?

Once you are happy with the outcomes you can move to identifying the provision.

### Some example outcomes

Overarching Theme	A not so good outcome	Why this wouldn't be a good outcome	Good person-centred outcome	Possible solutions (provision)
Learning and development/ learning skills and moving towards employment.	To have a personal assistant to take me to drama club.	A personal assistant is an example of the solution to getting the right support. The personal assistant is one of the options to make the outcome happen.	To go to the Saturday morning drama class without my parents. To have somebody who helps me join in the class.	To find a drama student who can support at the drama class.
	Go to college to do a car mechanics course.	This is an example of provision, not an outcome. The purpose of going to college is to get paid work, it is not an end in itself.	To learn the skills to get a paid job working with cars, working at least 16hrs per week.	The college course is a great solution to meet this outcome.

Home and Independence	To develop independent Living skills.	This is too broad, making it hard to measure. It doesn't reflect the kind of person he/she is or wants to be, eg. confident. It also doesn't set the context of the goal, ie getting to college with a friend. You can use a scale of 0-10 to check how confident somebody feels, and re-check later on.	To feel confident to catch the bus to college with my friend Jon, and know how to get support if I need to.	A travel-training programme could be a great solution to help achieve this outcome.
	To move into supported accommodation.	This is a limiting statement and not positive. It has looked at risk and support without considering how and with whom the person wants to live. It is a service response to an accommodation issue.	To live with my friends, Hannah and Paula, in a flat in town and to have the support we need to feel happy and safe.	To explore shared ownership as a way of purchasing a flat.  To develop a person specification and advert for the support workers.
Health and Wellbeing	To improve my fitness and stamina.	Just saying improving fitness and stamina is not specific enough, we don't know what is important to the person about it nor can we measure if it is being achieved.	I am using my manual wheelchair 12-14 hrs a day without being too tired and having to go to bed in the afternoon. I am going out with my friends one evening a week.	Working with a physiotherapist to get the correct position in the chair.  To use the leg bike and rowing machine 3 times a week.  To use the chair for 3 hours a day initially

	Referral to the dietician to lose weight.	This is an action that someone else needs to do, is negative and doesn't set the goal in context to the person. It doesn't reflect what is important to the person.	To eat 3 healthy meals a day and exercise 3 times a week so that I can fit into my prom dress by May.	To plan a week's worth of healthy meals, so there is a plan to follow.  To join a gym.
Friends, relationships and community	3 hours of speech and language therapy each week.	You can complete a 6-week course of speech and language therapy and still not be able to communicate with your friends. Speech and language therapy may be part of the provision to achieve the outcome, but it is a 'how' not a 'what'.	I want to be able to play/go out with my friends at least one or two evenings a week and at the weekends, and be understood by them so I can join in the fun.	The speech and language therapy is a good solution here but there may be other solutions to support this as well.

This publication was produced by the Preparing for Adulthood programme. The Preparing for Adulthood programme is funded by the Department for Education as part of the delivery support for the SEN and disability reforms. The Preparing for Adulthood programme is delivered by a partnership between The National Development Team for inclusion and The Council for Disabled Children.

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial research, education or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged. For any other use please contact us.

If you have any questions about the Preparing for Adulthood programme please contact us:

Email: [info@preparingforadulthood.org.uk](mailto:info@preparingforadulthood.org.uk)

Website: [www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/PfA\\_tweets](https://www.twitter.com/PfA_tweets)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/preparingforadulthood](https://www.facebook.com/preparingforadulthood)