

Defining outcomes

When defining outcomes, it can help to be mindful of the definition of a need, output and to be clear about what is opinion, what might be a fact, and what is simply hearsay. The definitions given below are all taken from www.oxforddictionaries.com unless stated otherwise.

Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require (something) because it is essential or very important rather than just desirable • Circumstances in which something is necessary • The state of requiring help, or of lacking basic necessities such as food • The reason the person needs support or the thing they need support with (CP / LJ)
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact or end results the person wishes to achieve (Glendinning et al, 2006) • The way a thing turns out; a consequence
Fact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thing that is known or proved to be true • An event or thing known to have happened (Collins) • A truth verifiable from experience or observation (Collins)
Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge • A statement of advice by an expert on a professional matter
Hearsay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information received from other people which cannot be substantiated. (Hearsay evidence – the report of another person's words by a witness, which is usually disallowed as evidence in court)
Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of something produced by a person, machine or industry • The action or process of producing something
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is put in, taken in or operated on by any process or system • A contribution of work or information

Bear in mind that a need can be factual, or might be opinion, so requires appropriate substantiation. Likewise, opinions also need to be substantiated. Both can be checked out by appropriate information gathering and the use of powerful questions.

What is an outcome?

Which of the definitions do you feel best describes each of the statements below?

Statement	Definition (i.e. need, outcome, fact, etc)
I can't get out and about anymore because of the problems with my legs	
To have a better social life by being part of an art club	
Provision of information on local art and craft clubs and activities	
Mrs X is lonely because she doesn't see anyone – she said "I really miss visits from Anne but she has moved away and now I don't see anyone"	
Mum just sits and watches TV all day	
During my visit I observed that Mrs X was having difficulties making a cup of tea and seemed unsure of how to sequence the individual parts of the task	
Referral for an assessment by the memory clinic	
Report produced following assessment at the memory clinic	
Mum loves tomatoes. She often asks for them and when we have salad she always eats all of the tomatoes first	
A neighbour reported that a friend told him Mrs X had been seen wandering in her nightclothes near the shop a few weeks ago	
To have regular meals that I enjoy at times that suit me	

Mr Y used the toilet whilst I was there without any issues. He told me that the frame is great because it makes it much easier for him	
Supply of a raised toilet seat	
Dr F has suggested that some gentle exercise, like walking to the end of the garden and back, would be beneficial to Mr Y's mobility	
I think Mr Y would struggle with making meals himself	
To be able to walk safely in my garden without being afraid of falling	
Eligibility determination resulting from assessment process	

Below are some example needs with suggestions for the potential impact, desired outcomes and inputs / interventions

In all of the examples below the resulting documentation, write up of conversation, support plan, information provided in the form of notes, booklets, leaflets, flyers would be possible outputs.

Need	Impact on wellbeing	Outcome	Input / Intervention
I am unable to access or participate in social activities independently – having to rely on others frustrates me	X feels that her control over daily life is compromised and she feels lonely. Her frustration affects how behaves towards people and isolating her from her family and friends	To be able spend time with other people with similar interests so I don't feel so lonely or frustrated and can spend more time with my family and friends	Identifying things which happen locally that may be of interest

<p>I cannot use my shower and do not have a bath in my home</p>	<p>I don't like my personal care being done by people I don't feel comfortable with so I am unable to be as clean as I would like. This has an impact on how I feel about myself, my dignity, and on my skin integrity</p>	<p>To be able to keep myself as clean and presentable as I want to and manage my skin integrity better</p>	<p>Identifying potential options for accessing a bath or for supporting the person to feel safer in the shower</p>
<p>I am unsteady on my feet and cannot use my four wheeled walker safely outside</p>	<p>I don't feel safe so I don't go out and really miss this - I don't feel I have enough control over my life</p>	<p>To be able to feel safer walking inside and outside of my home so that I feel more confident and have more control</p>	<p>Assessment by Occupational Therapy (OT) Service / review of mobility and suitability of walking aids</p>
<p>I am unable to get out to do my shopping on my own although I do some meals myself</p>	<p>I don't have any food in the house and so I can't make what I want to eat when I want it</p>	<p>To be able to get to the shops or to get my shopping so I can continue to make meals myself</p>	<p>Identifying options for support with shopping / ready meals / lunch clubs etc</p>
<p>I sometimes forget things and I can get mixed up</p>	<p>The fact that I forget things and get mixed up sometime means it is difficult for me to get out and about or to have a routine for my daily life. It also affects my decision making, my safety and the relationship I have with my family</p>	<p>To be able to manage and maintain my mental health so I feel more in control of my life</p>	<p>Involvement of Mental Health team / GP / memory clinic / Dementia support services Provision of Assistive Technology to prompt memory</p>

<p>I am in residential care and feel that I do not have control over my life. I want to return home</p>	<p>Being in the residential home has made X withdrawn and isolated. She does not engage much with the carers and as a result most of the areas of her life are affected negatively</p>	<p>To be able to return to my home and live there with some independence</p>	<p>Undertaking a risk assessment / capacity assessment / best interest's assessment / OT assessment / involvement of other professionals and support services</p>
<p>I am unable to do my own shopping and am unable to prepare and cook my own meals</p>	<p>I'm not getting enough to eat and am living on biscuits as my daughter can't always get my shopping. I've lost a lot of weight and am worried about my health</p>	<p>To be able to have access to meals and a good balanced diet to improve my health</p>	<p>Investigation of potential for online shopping / Discussion with daughter / identification of neighbours or friends in area who might help / potential for local shop to deliver some items / local meals service which might deliver</p>
<p>I have difficulty chewing and using cutlery and need support to be able to eat</p>	<p>I worry about choking and so tend to only eat soft food like soup and custard. This isn't very interesting and so I don't eat much because I don't fancy it. I've lost a little bit of weight</p>	<p>To have food that is appropriate for me to eat with a spoon and that I enjoy eating</p>	<p>Equipment suitable to puree or mash food which would be more appetising and varied, undertaking a Speech and Language Therapy assessment</p>
<p>I don't always know when to eat or what to eat and need help with this</p>	<p>If I don't have help with this, I wouldn't eat or drink regularly. I've lost a lot of weight recently and often fall because I get dizzy this has meant I've ended up in hospital</p>	<p>To be able to have access to meals and a good balanced diet to improve my health</p>	<p>Identification of sources of informal and/or formal support to prompt meals and drink and to support with eating and drinking at appropriate times</p>

<p>I get lonely on my own. I need some company or someone to take me out in the town</p>	<p>I see less and less people all the time and this makes me sad and cross. Sometimes I snap at people I care about because I am frustrated. I don't get to do anything that I want to enjoy anymore and feel really isolated</p>	<p>To be able to get out and about so I don't feel so lonely and frustrated and can spend more time with my family and friends</p>	<p>Identification of sources of informal and/or formal support to provide social contact and activity</p>
<p>I am very short sighted and cannot read small print or labels</p>	<p>I don't remember all of what is said and if I don't have it written down so I can read it back then I don't know what is happening and feel lost – like I have no say about anything</p>	<p>To be able to read the information sent to me about my assessment and support planning easily and feel more in control of my support.</p>	<p>Provision of information in large print. ROVI assessment / provision of minor equipment (for example a magnifying glass)</p>