Indicators for Measuring Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice working together with their statutory funders to make monitoring and evaluation of advice more rational and more useful
Indicators for Measuring Citizens Advice

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Indicators for Measuring Citizens Advice
This document gives a core/simplified list of indicators for measuring Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) advice activity and outcomes. It is likely to have wider application for other advice agencies.

It has been developed through a project, Harmonising Indicators Project (HIP) by a group of CABx representatives and statutory funders. (See Background and approach on page 29)

We* hope these indicators will be used by
- CABx: to report to their local authority and other funders
- Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS): to develop the client management database
- Improvement Service (IS): to support local authorities
- Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB), Scottish Government and other funders: to inform their approach to collecting data from agencies that provide advice.

*’We’ means the learning set members. It is a term we use throughout this document.

**Section 1: Introduction and approach to measurement**

This section introduces the pack, what it is about, our approach to evaluation and how this pack links to other work.

**What this document is about**

This document is divided into several sections focusing on different topics. The table below shows you where to go for particular information.

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<th>Issues covered</th>
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1 Members came from Scottish Legal Aid Board, The Improvement Service, Scottish Government, Citizens Advice Scotland and Nairn, Parkhead and East Ayrshire Citizens Advice Bureaux.
Links to other work

Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice
This work started with the Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice logic model in which we identified

- Short term outcomes: which are immediate outcomes and which happen as a result of a good advice process and good client experience
- Personal outcomes: which link to the advice issue
- Long term outcomes: impact on personal, family and community life
- Strategic outcomes.

We decided to slightly reframe these outcomes to 3 core types of outcome that CABx could routinely measure (See page 17). This helped us to simplify measurement and take account of funders requirements and ways of describing things. In essence we

- dropped the timeline agreeing that outcomes happen at different times for different clients
- agreed a smaller number of (core or common) indicators for advice service and advice outcomes
- agreed to focus on client outcomes around wellbeing and capacity to deal with other issues.

Other work
There are existing frameworks to which the approach adopted will add value:

The Money Advice Performance Management Framework (MAPMF) aims to capture key performance indicators for money advice services funded by local authorities on both an in-house and commissioned basis. See ‘Scottish Local Authorities Money Advice Performance Management /framework 2012-16 Data Analysis Report’.

The Improvement Service, together with the Scottish Government and Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB), have developed ‘A Framework for Public Funding of Advice’. This provides a common approach to funding of advice services. The framework sets out the key elements that public funders should take into account when reviewing their current funding arrangements with advice and representation services or when funding new projects.

Our approach to measurement
Before we undertook any work we reflected upon the principles that would underlie our approach.

Keep it simple and consistent
We agreed that we needed to have a simple set of measures so that we could answer questions in a consistent way, like

- How many people do CABx help?
- What is the profile of people using CABx?
- What areas of advice are CABx addressing?
- What actions are CABx taking?
- What outcomes are we achieving for the community and for individuals?

Harmonise requirements
Currently CABx may have to record case information several times to meet different funders’ requirements. We wanted to harmonise requirements so that CABx can

- reduce duplication and the overall amount of time spent on data entry
- spend more time on seeing clients
- focus more energy on evaluating outcomes.

Funders can
- ensure some consistency between CABx, allowing them to aggregate their impact and compare like with like.

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2 Go to ESS website for the MOCA pack
Focus on ‘core’ and ‘common’

We concluded that different people need different data at different times for different purposes and in different forms. Funders may want information for performance management, CABx and CAS for research and social policy issues. Both might want to assess the impact of funding and to identify areas for service improvement. All might need different levels of detail.

We agreed that it’s helpful to think about core data which is important for everyone and additional information collected for particular projects or purposes. In this document we concentrate on ‘core indicators’. That is data that meets the minimum requirements for funders, CAS and bureaux. It is data that is common and/or essential.

All parties have taken the opportunity to identify where they could change their own requirements.

Projects can collect additional data or undertake more in-depth pieces of evaluation.

But first, be clear why you need additional information, how long for and the way it will be used.

Follow principles underlying good evaluation

We found Funders Evaluation Declaration helpful. Developed by the Scotland Funders’ Forum, it notes that evaluation should be

- **Valuable**: adds value and helps to improve services, make decisions, plan for the future
- ** Relevant**: is used, shared and acted on
- **Proportionate**: right for size and complexity of the activity
- **Supported**: by the funder/organisation
- **Inside and outside**: should start with self-evaluation, although external evaluation can add value.

We reflected upon past experience of ‘good evaluation’ and drew out some further broad principles as follows:

- Evaluation should be about improvement as well as accountability.
- It shouldn’t all be about activity and profiling, we need to measure the difference being made too.
- It’s important to ask why particular information is relevant, if it’s not, we should stop collecting it!
- We should be realistic about what is good enough. We can never achieve ‘perfect’.
- Buy-in is important if we are to get good data. It helps if:
  - It’s clear why we are evaluating and how the information will be used
  - If agencies collecting information can make use of the data themselves (easy access to information, training and support on how to collate and use information is important)
  - Less is more: we don’t have to collect information on everything all of the time.
  - It’s important to have a shared understanding of what things mean and how to count things (clear definitions).
  - It helps to have a range of methods, qualitative and quantitative and taken from different perspectives.
  - It’s important to evaluate the evaluation process: for example did we ask questions at the best time and in the best way.
  - We should be transparent about our methods and what has worked and hasn’t.
  - It helps to know the context and how findings and learning from evaluation can and will be used. This helps to refine our messages.
Measuring advice activity is an important part of monitoring the work of CABx. We aim to create some consistency in how CABx record and count what they do. This involves outlining what should be measured, defining what we mean by different terms and looking at the process for measuring activity.

**What we should measure**

We agreed that it would be useful to count:

- Contacts (and client numbers for each method of contact)
- The number of clients in any given period
- The number of advice issues addressed
- The type of support given (and numbers for each type of advice).

Initially we got bogged down in defining what was a 'case' but realised that this was not helpful.

**Defining contact, client, issue and type of advice**

**Contact**: This is where the person has direct interaction with the bureau. This can be through a range of methods (personal contact, phone or email). CABx count how many people contact them through these different methods. Contact is not counted where the sole information is about how to make an appointment, opening times etc.

**Client**: This is a person who has had contact with the bureau and has received information or advice or assistance.

**Advice issue**: These are distinct areas of advice (SLAB would call them matters). CABx talk about advice in terms of advice codes at three levels:

- Level one: relates to the broad advice area; there are 16 broad advice areas, for example benefits, housing, employment, consumer etc.
- Level two: gives more detail about the type of enquiry, for example within benefits is it housing benefit, PIP or child benefit? etc.
- Level three: breaks down the issue even further, for example for child benefit - is it alleged fraud, payment, reconsideration? etc.

**Defining a case**

This was problematic because it means different things to different people. To some the client is the case (once advice has been given). In some bureaux, if the work is split into different parts (e.g. debt/employment) then it becomes two or more cases. To some, each and every issue is a case. The definition of case partly relates to the way an enquiry is recorded and managed within the bureaux and partly to the reporting requirements of funders. We found we could not come up with one shared definition.
Activity type

This is the type of advice given as laid down by the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers (SNSIAP). They describe types of advice activity under 3 headings:

- **Type I advice**
  Active information, signposting and explanation

- **Type II advice**
  Casework

- **Type III advice**
  Advocacy, Representation and Mediation at Tribunal or Court

Advice issue

We agreed that reporting up to advice code level two might be a core requirement for funders. For internal reporting and learning or for particular projects, level three might be used. (Although not every bureau routinely collects data at level three).

The process of measuring activity

The following process identifies in broad terms the client journey and how we can count things:

### A person contacts the bureaux

That contact is recorded so that CAB can count the methods of contact e.g. phone/personal visit/email etc.

### A client can have multiple contacts and seek help with multiple areas of advice

At each contact we record:

- The method and date of contact
- Advice issue/area of advice: recorded up to 3 levels
- Advice support given according to SNSIAP type.

### There should be an end point for each area of advice

This might be because there has been no further contact for some time or because the issue is settled (could be negatively or positively). At this point any outcomes should be noted.
Example

Here is a diagram for one client, where each colour represents a different advice issue.

In this instance there is:
- 1 client
- 2 contacts
- 6 advice issues.

SNSIAP actions taken include:
- 1 instance of type I (active information, signposting and explanation)
- 3 type II (casework tasks)
- 2 type III (advocacy, representation or mediation tasks) (leading to outcomes directly related to the advice issues in question).

Together these lead to client outcomes (which are discussed in a later section).
Indicators for Measuring Citizens Advice
This section discusses how CABx profile clients to understand who they are reaching within their local communities. We outline the current situation and suggest a core client profile. We offer some basic guidance for using this profile.

The current situation
Currently different funders count different characteristics of the client and use different coding categories within those characteristics. This might mean that clients might need to complete more than one profile or that bureaux workers have to record the information more than once.

Sometimes the client profile is very long and it's not always clear how the information is used. We wanted to identify a simple and rationalised list that would work for everyone.

Common characteristics
We identified common aspects that were important to everyone, some additional aspects that were important for some types of cases and some less commonly asked for characteristics. We based the core profile around common characteristics.

We recognised however that for at least 4 weeks of the year CAS would ask for bureau information on a broader number of characteristics to better inform their social policy work.

**Common characteristics to collect data around**
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Housing tenure
- Illness/disability
- Household type
- Employment status
- Household income

**Additional characteristics to collect data around**
- Caring responsibilities
- Relationship /marital status
- Nationality

**Also sometimes asked for, but not commonly**
- Gender reassignment
- Religion/belief
- Sexual orientation
- Financial inclusion
Coding categories

Within those characteristics, different coding categories are being used. We identified a simplified list that seemed to work for funders, CAS and CABx most of the time. This would be used for reporting to funders.

Within each aspect or characteristic (for example Ethnicity), CAS want to retain a larger number of sub-categories for greater evaluation and analysis of the issues that people are bringing to bureaux. We agreed, as long as the larger number can be subsumed within the smaller list of categories required by the Improvement Service and SLAB, this difference in approach is fine.

This longer profile would be completed by bureaux for 4 weeks of the year.

Who fills in the form?

CAS guidance is that the client profile form should be completed by the client because the client has to define themselves. If the client is not willing, this should be marked as ‘preferred not to answer’. Data protection requires that we have consent to use the data.

Some clients may need assistance to complete the form if they have limited reading and/or writing skills.

For income, it may be difficult for the client to give an accurate answer. With the client’s permission, CAB may use the income figure identified through undertaking a benefits check or a review of disposable income.

Further guidance is available to CABx on the Citizens Advice Scotland website.

It’s useful to have a ‘population’ comparator, but some are using the household survey (IS), and some the census (CAS).

Census questions are being reviewed again this year. For this reason we have not assumed a core set of age ranges, instead date of birth should be identified wherever possible.

http://www.cas.org.uk/bureau-zone/guidance/client-profile-survey
Client Profile Survey – Core

To improve our service we need to check the profile of people who seek our advice.

It will only take a few minutes of your time and everything will be treated as confidential. Please complete all questions and tick the appropriate box (only 1 per question).

Postcode

Date of Birth

Day (dd)  Month (mm)  Year (yyyy)

What is your age range?

This will be different for each funder

□ prefer not to answer

Gender

□ Male

□ Female

□ prefer not to answer

What is your ethnic group?

□ White

□ Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group

□ Asian, Asian Scottish or British

□ African

□ Caribbean or Black

□ Other Ethnic group

□ prefer not to answer

What is your employment status?

□ Full time work (30+ hours)

□ Part time work (less than 30 hours)

□ Self-employed

□ Unemployed and seeking work

□ Government work or training scheme

□ Unable to work because of short-term illness or injury

□ Permanently sick or disabled

□ Looking after home /family

□ At school in further/higher education

□ Permanently retired from work

□ Other

□ prefer not to answer

Do you have a disability or health condition?

Disability under the Equality Act 2010 is defined as: ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

□ Yes

□ No

□ prefer not to answer

What is your housing status?

□ Tenant (Social Landlord)

□ Tenant (Private Landlord)

□ Owner occupier

□ Homeless (roofless or in unsecure accommodation)

□ Other tenure (e.g. Living rent free)

□ prefer not to answer

What is your household type?

□ Family (2 or more adults, 1 + dependent children*)

□ Adult family (non-pension; no dependent children*)

□ Older adult family (at least 1 adult pensioner)

□ Single parent (1 adult; dependent children*)

□ Single adult (non-pensioner)

□ Single pensioner

□ Other

□ prefer not to answer

*Note: Dependent child is a person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family), or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family.

What is your household Income?

□ £6,000 or less

□ £6,001 - £10,000

□ £10,001 - £15,000

□ £15,001 - £20,000

□ £20,001 - £25,000

□ £25,001 - £30,000

□ £30,001 - £40,000

□ Over £40,000

□ prefer not to answer

Note income includes help with housing costs

Section 3: Measuring who uses our services
This section outlines an approach to measuring different types of outcome. We suggest three core types of outcome to measure, we talk about how we use outcome indicators, then we take each type of outcome and outline indicators and potential methods.

Core outcomes to measure

We recognise that many outcomes can come from giving advice and it would be difficult to capture and code every type of outcome for every client. In order to simplify our approach we identified 3 types of outcomes that we should measure routinely.

Advice service outcomes

These are about creating a level playing field for all in relation to legal rights, responsibilities and redress. They are at the heart of the work of citizens advice.

Individuals in need have access to good quality advice services

Individuals experience a fair process / the end result was fair

Advice outcomes

These are practical outcomes that relate to the specific area of advice. We have taken level one advice codes (from April 2017):

- Benefits
- Consumer
- Debt
- Education
- Employment
- Finance and charitable support
- Health and community care
- Housing
- Immigration, asylum and nationality
- Legal proceedings
- NHS concern and complaint
- Relationship
- Travel, transport and holidays
- Utilities and communications
- Discrimination

Client outcomes

This is the impact on the client and their family.

We have chosen to focus on two key outcomes:

Improved health and wellbeing

Feels able to address this and other issues/ seek support

Measured by a set of 8 indicators using an outcome wheel or similar.

Individual projects might want to set additional outcomes to measure, dependent on the needs of the project and the funder.
Our approach to measuring outcomes

For each outcome we identify indicators, then potential methods.

Indicators are signs that you have achieved your outcome. We wanted to keep it simple and ensure some consistency so for each outcome we identified a few key indicators. We developed these by asking ‘what would it look like if CABx achieved their outcomes?’. We prioritised those we felt were most useful. Where it was appropriate we put these into statements that clients could recognise.

For methods we identified that different types of outcomes need different types of methods. These are outlined in more detail later. Also see the section on collecting and storing data (page 27) for a short discussion about the range of methods that might be used.

We recognise that sometimes CABx don’t have outcomes and sometimes they are not as positive as the client would wish.

It isn’t always within the power of CABx to achieve positive outcomes for clients. Sometimes the system doesn’t work well or adequately meet client needs. CAB provide information about systems failures to local providers or to the CAS Social Policy team.

We identified that sometimes there is no direct outcome because

- the CAB lost contact with the client
- the service has been withdrawn from the client
- the client has withdrawn/decided to deal with the issue themselves
- the client decided to take no further action
- the client has been referred to another advice service (internal or solicitor/advocate/law centre).

Measuring advice service outcomes

These are about creating a level playing field for all in relation to legal rights, responsibilities and redress. They are at the heart of the work of citizens advice.

We identified two outcomes

- Individuals have access to good quality advice services
- Individuals experience a fair process/the end result was fair.

In the grid below we identify indicators for each outcome and potential measurement methods. See Measuring Outcome from Citizens Advice (MOCA) pack for more examples of methods.

Please note that it was outwith the scope of this project to look at quality assessment and improvement more generally, although there is a clear overlap with advice service outcomes. We considered the audit process only in so far as it might provide evidence of these two client outcomes.

6 Go to ESS website for the MOCA pack
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Outcome indicator</th>
<th>Possible methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals in need have access to good quality advice services</td>
<td><strong>It is easy to access advice</strong></td>
<td>Survey of sample of clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I can easily get to the advice centre</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I can physically access the building</td>
<td>Capture unsolicited comments (e.g. cards in a box)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I feel comfortable going to the CAB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I can get advice when I need it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- My communication needs are met</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I feel listened to</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advice is good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The advice I was given was accurate, relevant and</td>
<td>Audit of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>timely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I am clear about my options and next steps</td>
<td>End of interview question/survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I have confidence in the adviser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The best possible outcome was achieved</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>\textbf{I got access to representation}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I was advised to seek advice from a solicitor/other</td>
<td>Record of referrals and action taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agency for higher level of advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I got help to appeal/represent myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Adviser appealed decision</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I was represented at</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Benefits tribunal</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Employment tribunal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Court hearing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals experience a fair process/ the end result was fair</td>
<td><strong>I got what I wanted</strong></td>
<td>Survey of sample of clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I was satisfied with the outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I was satisfied with the way things were handled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Measuring advice outcomes

These are practical outcomes that relate to a specific area of advice. We took each level one advice code and identified a few key practical outcomes.

We identified that outcomes might be noted as part of ongoing work and captured on a case management system, with a review on case closure or a sample survey.

Please note that for specific projects or for social policy reasons more detailed outcome codes might be collected. **We are focused here on core reporting.** We suggest that funders could choose which of the indicators below are of most interest to them. We do not suggest that CABx report to every funder on every indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 advice code</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Benefits** | - Benefit awarded  
- Benefit not awarded  
- Client income maximised  
- Correct tax code identified and applied  
- Overpayment of tax identified and recovered | Note outcome if and when client or other agency gives feedback |
| **Consumer** | - Statutory rights enforced  
- Refund agreed  
- Refund refused  
- Repair agreed  
- Repair refused  
- Replacement agreed  
- Replacement refused  
- Apology | Follow up or review at case closure  
Survey sample of cases |
| **Debt** | - Debt successfully challenged  
- Debt strategy agreed/completed  
- Verified financial gain  
- Income maximised  
- Improved financial capability | |
| **Education** | - Grants accessed  
- Grants not secured | |
| **Employment** | - Employment rights improved  
- Employment rights maintained  
- Employment rights enforced  
- Claim to employment tribunal won  
- Claim settled outwith tribunal | |
| **Finance and charitable support** | - Receives charitable grant  
- Access financial product | |
| **Health and community care** | - Requested outcome achieved  
- Apology/redress secured  
- Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) successful  
- ADR not successful | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Client keeps their home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House repossessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Client evicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Client rehoused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mortgage to rent obtained</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action taken against landlord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repairs completed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repairs not completed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADR successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADR not successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration, asylum and nationality</td>
<td>Client aware of deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to stay in UK established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to other services established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal proceedings</td>
<td>Claim settled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim dismissed in clients favour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim dismissed not in clients favour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repossession order granted/recalled</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fee remission obtained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fee remission not obtained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Housing rights secured</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial provision secured (e.g. maintenance/child support)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to children confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referred to appropriate support agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADR successful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ADR unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>ADR successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADR unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liability/dispute resolved</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liability/dispute unresolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel, transports and holidays</td>
<td>Travel and transport charge or action successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel and transport charge or action unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue badge awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue badge not awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADR successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADR unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and communications</td>
<td>Complaint made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction in utility costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overpaid utility payments recovered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overpaid utility payments not recovered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apology for poor service received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintained supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did not maintain supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Discrimination stopped or resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination not stopped or resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Client aware of legal process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measuring client outcomes

This is the impact on the client and their family. We have chosen to focus on two key outcomes:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Feels able to address current and other issues/seek support.

We identified that there may be a whole range of other outcomes. However, at this stage these seem to be the most important ones to measure.

CABx might want to capture other outcomes in case studies to show funders the rich range of outcomes that impact on quality of life. For example, ‘I can now afford a pet’, ‘I’m getting out and seeing friends’ or ‘We are eating better’.

We have identified 7 key indicators. We also developed 3 potential methods for measuring those indicators:

- A wellbeing wheel (page 23)
- A more simple scaled assessment
- Questions in a survey.

To ensure consistency of use in CABx, we would need to develop paperwork and systems for collecting, analysing and reporting. We would need to pilot the methods to establish if we have identified the right indicators, and the best timing and circumstances for collecting data.

We identified that:

- It would only be used in a sample of cases where there is more in depth casework
- It would be best if there was a baseline and subsequent review after there have been clear advice outcomes
- The timing of this may vary from case to case
- It is important to develop a relationship with the client before asking them to complete the wheel/survey.

Other work happening in this area

MAP tool

Since we started this work The Improvement Service has received funding from the Money Advice Service to support the development by Scottish local authorities of a common approach to measuring and reporting on identified money advice client outcomes.

Following the publication of the Money Advice Performance Management Framework (MAPMF) 2014-15 data analysis report, meetings were held with Local Authorities and key partners to review the content of the Framework. These identified the following developmental areas:

- Extending the scope to include financial inclusion and financial capability.
- Measuring and reporting on the delivery of some of the wider outcomes or benefits for clients such as: improved confidence through better control of their finances; reduction in stress due to financial stability and increased financial resilience, and feeling positive about the future.

As a result, several Local Authorities and their partners are currently testing the ‘MAP’ which has been developed by Toynbee Hall. The results of the pilot will be reported in June 2017.

Research into the impact of advice services on health

Fuse in partnership with Citizens Advice Gateshead have undertaken research into the impact of advice on health and inequalities. It may be useful to check their approach to ensure we are including the most relevant aspects within the tool that we have developed.

7  http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/money-access-and-participation-tool
8  http://www.fuse.ac.uk/
Wellbeing wheel: a tool that can be used to collect feedback from clients

Each circle represents a number with 1 at the centre and 5 at the outer edge. The guiding statements on the next page are used to determine the number.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I have been feeling relaxed                                  | 1. I am feeling stressed, unable to eat or sleep or think properly and don’t know what to do  
2. I need help to focus on what is most important and deal with things in order  
3. I am comfortable that I have found the right place to get help  
4. I am feeling more confident that I can sort out things for myself  
5. I am feeling calm and relaxed                                |
| I’ve been feeling motivated to do things                      | 1. I have no motivation  
2. I need other people to prompt me to do something  
3. I would like to do things, but I don’t know how  
4. I am motivated to do some things but sometimes need help doing other things  
5. I have a plan about how to do things and I follow it through |
| I have been getting on with other people                      | 1. I avoid people  
2. I argue with friends and/or family  
3. I spend time with friends and/or family  
4. I feel comfortable talking to people I don’t know  
5. I enjoy being with friends and/or family and they enjoy being with me |
| I feel confident about making decisions                        | 1. I do not make decisions and don’t care about making decisions  
2. I am aware that decisions need to be made but need prompting and assistance to make decisions  
3. I am interested in making my own decisions  
4. I am learning how to make decisions but still need support  
5. I am able to make decisions for myself with confidence |
| I’ve been feeling physically well                              | 1. I feel my physical health is poor and I can only do things with help from others  
2. I feel physically better and have some support  
3. I feel my physical health has improved and I would like to do more  
4. I feel physically better and can do some things on my own  
5. I feel physically better and can do the things I would like to do |
| I’m looking after myself                                       | 1. I feel unable to look after myself  
2. I rely on others to make decisions regarding my wellbeing  
3. I want to look after myself but need help and care from others  
4. I feel well enough to look after myself and know that I can ask for support when I need it  
5. I can look after myself                                      |
| I’m able to speak up for my rights and fulfil my responsibilities | 1. I am not interested in my rights and responsibilities  
2. I would like to speak up but I don’t know what my rights and responsibilities are  
3. I need help to find out what my rights and responsibilities are  
4. I know about my rights and responsibilities but I need someone to help me speak up  
5. I am able to speak up for my rights and responsibilities |
### Survey questions

These survey questions would be filled in early in the advice process and after outcome achieved.

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have been feeling relaxed</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>I’m looking after myself</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m able to speak up for my rights and fulfil my responsibilities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Indicators for Measuring Citizens Advice
Collecting and storing data
We agreed that there might be different methods for collecting and storing different sorts of information.

A database might be the key tool for collecting information on:
- Client profile
- How the client made contact
- Advice issues raised
- Action taken (specific actions classified by Type I, II & III)
- Advice outcomes.

Often this will be filled in as part of managing the advice issue and is recorded for ‘case’ management as well as monitoring purposes.

For advice outcomes, the CABx may also need to follow up clients to see what the outcome was. This might be done through a survey or a general follow up before a folder is closed down.

An audit of systems, can gather information on advice service outcomes. It can assess whether the CAB is functioning well, the service is accessible and good quality of advice is given. Currently CABx are audited every three years by CAS (this is under review) and periodically by some funders in relation to specific types of issues (for example, debt).

Surveys and interviews of a sample of clients can be used to assess impact on all 3 types of outcomes, advice service outcomes, advice outcomes and client outcomes. That might include a wellbeing wheel or scaled assessment. It could either be anonymous or not.

See the Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice pack for more ideas about methods that can be adopted and adapted for bureaux.

Questions for thinking about evaluation
- Are you clear about what you are trying to measure and why?
- Who is asking for this information and how are they going to use it?
- What’s good enough data for the question you are trying to answer?
- Is it for all clients, all of the time or a sample (a short period or selected clients)?
- Will it feel proportionate to the client (not a 50 page questionnaire for 5 minutes advice!)?
- How is the information going to be collected, stored, analysed and reported on?
- Who is going to do this work?
- Do they have the time, skills and motivation to collect, analyse, report and use the data?
- Who can give you help and support (for example, Citizens Advice Scotland)?
- When is the best time for collecting data and from which clients?
- How will you know that your evaluation has been useful and how it can be improved?

We are aware of the tension between the benefits of consistency of method between advice agencies and the need for bureaux to adapt approaches to their own needs.

This set of indicators is a move towards consistency. At least CABx will be measuring the same things, albeit in different ways and at different times.
Indicators for Measuring Citizens Advice
We include more information about the background to this work and the process of developing the pack.

Appendix one: Background and approach

Harmonising Indicators Project is a follow up programme from Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice. The work was initiated by Parkhead CAB and is funded by Citizens Advice Scotland Development Committee.

Between May 2016 and March 2017 a learning set met 6 times to explore how we could develop a more proportionate and useful monitoring and reporting system for bureaux by:

- Identifying a more rational set of indicators that CABx can offer to funders
- Seeing what scope there is for harmonising reporting requirements amongst different funders
- Feeding into developments for a better case management system.

The learning set involved representatives from CABx, Citizens Advice Scotland, Scottish Legal Aid Board, Scottish Government and The Improvement Service. One member from Dundee City Council was unable to attend meetings, but fed back his views through another member of the learning set. Each member of the learning set reported and got feedback on our work with their stakeholders.

We tested our findings through a reference group, a forum on the KHub and a webinar.

This allowed us to consult other people, including individuals from Health Scotland, Money Advice Service and managers of bureaux not directly involved in the learning set.

10 Go to ESS website for the MOCA pack
What we did

Consult with own organisation

Consult with local authority/ies

6 Learning set meetings involving:
3 CABx, Citizens Advice Scotland, Scottish Government, SLAB, Improvement Service

Webinars/KHub forum

Reference group: Money Advice Service, Health Scotland, bureaux managers, other local authority staff

The benefits of a collaborative approach

We agreed that there were strengths in bringing together funders and funded agencies with a neutral facilitator. As individuals we increased our understanding of different perspectives and what was shared.

I can see things from a more rounded perspective

Helped me to understand how others work

We use the same words, but we don’t all have the same understanding of what those words mean

An appreciation that the issues faced by other organisations are no different to the CAB service

Collectively we managed to tackle difficult issues and find common ground. Answers to “what we have achieved together that we could not alone?” included:

Understanding of each other’s data and where there are differences

A greater understanding of the recording and reporting requirements of stakeholders

Find potential solutions to what appeared to be insurmountable problems - the ‘C’ word

A recognition that different systems are ok if the data is consistently recorded and reported

It took a bit of time and a lot of discussion, but we did agree a common format of essential information

Commitment to moving forward

Next steps

This is a step along the path to meaningful measurement. Further steps include:

- Sharing with more people, specifically CABx staff, other advice agencies and funders (local and national) and local authority staff.
- Testing out the client outcomes and indicators with advice providers (page 22): is the suggested focus right and have we got the right indicators and method?
- Have discussions with a broad group of stakeholders about how these indicators can be used in practice, both in terms of collecting information (timing and methods) and in agreeing reporting requirements.
- Set up systems so that core indicators can be reviewed on a regular basis. These should not be set in stone for all time, to keep them relevant and useful we need to keep checking that data collection is adding value.

11 C stands for CASE
Appendix two: Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice

Between June 2014 and March 2015 ESS ran a learning set of CAB practitioners aiming to:

- **Explain**: developing a collective model of the sector (in this case the advice sector) and showing links to national and local outcomes
- **Measure**: developing methods to collect information about outcomes
- **Prove**: bringing together research and practice based evidence to test models of provision (policy and practice).

As a result we developed the Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice (MOCA) pack. This pack was shared with bureaux through regional days in September 2015 and launched at a conference for over 250 people, organised by The Improvement Service, Scottish Government and Scottish Legal Aid Board and CAS/CABx in October 2015, this was funded by the Scottish Government.

During this process we identified:

- That different funders require bureaux to measure clients, cases and advice given in different ways; leading to multiple recording of the same data for different funders.
- Client profiling and activity reporting is very time consuming, leaving less time for evaluating outcomes or using data to improve services.
- It would be helpful to identify what data is most essential to bureaux, funders and commissioners for accountability and to improve service provision and reach.
- There seems to be some discrepancies between advice agencies in how they define and count a case, record the level of work and outcomes.
- This may be making it difficult for funders and commissioners to understand the overall reach and impact of their funding and to compare like with like.

At the conference there was support across all the sectors for reviewing systems of measurement to ensure greater consistency across reporting requirements, to make better use of qualitative data and to put a greater emphasis on soft outcomes.

This work fits well with other initiatives to improve evaluation and performance monitoring for example:

Debt advice evaluation framework: The Money Advice Service


Scottish Legal Aid Board and the Improvement Service are considering the outcomes they want advice services to report on.

Citizens Advice Bureaux in Scotland

Citizens Advice Bureaux are local, independent charities that provide free and confidential advice and information whoever you are and whatever your problem.

There is a Citizens Advice Bureau in almost every community in Scotland, across more than 250 locations, helping more than 250,000 people each year.

CABx aims

- To ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their need effectively and, equally
- To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

The Scottish Citizens Advice Bureau Service is guided by 12 principles:

1. A free service
2. Confidentiality
3. Impartiality
4. Independence
5. Accessibility
6. Effectiveness
7. Community accountability
8. Client’s right to decide
9. A voluntary service
10. Empowerment
11. Information retrieval
12. A generalist service

For more information about our service go to www.cas.org.uk/about-us/citizens-advice-bureaux

Evaluation Support Scotland

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) works with third sector organisations and funders so that they can measure and report on their impact.

Evaluation Support Scotland
5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR
Phone: 0131 243 2770
Email: info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk
Website: www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

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May 2017

This publication is related to Measuring Outcomes from Citizens Advice.