

PfG Consultation Q&A

- 1. The draft Outcomes emphasise the importance of giving people the best start in life and keeping them healthy and active afterwards, but says nothing about the end stage of the life cycle – what consideration has been given to the importance of end of life and bereavement support?**

The PfG draft Outcomes Framework sets out our initial thinking around what the Outcomes and Key Priority Areas could be. This issue is an example of what we want people to tell us about through the consultation and we want to hear the views of as many people as possible. We have taken a note of this point but would really encourage you to consider submitting a full consultation response to fully capture this and any other views you have on the framework.

- 2. What is the thinking on the indicators to measure the impact of these outcomes on the lives of people with a learning disability?**

The aim of the PfG is to improve wellbeing for everyone. The draft Outcomes have been developed with that aim in mind, whilst ensuring each Outcome provides a basis from which actions can be designed to address inequalities. Whilst there is a commitment to provide all PfG population level Indicators at S75 level, we recognise that data for people with learning disabilities are not routinely available. The Executive's commitment to an Outcomes-based approach includes a commitment to performance level, as well as population level, accountability. This means Government Departments will measure performance at policy and programme level – i.e. effectively allowing monitoring of impact of each intervention at the most detailed level possible (i.e. specific to participants). This means that the impact of actions on the lives of people with a learning disability can be directly measured.

- 3. Will there be consultation on the indicators used to measure progress?**

There are no plans currently to consulting on Indicators. Building on lessons from 2016, the process for bringing forward Indicator proposals has been revised to ensure early focus on objectivity, clarity and technical quality. Good indicators tell us something important about the current situation – is it improving, getting worse or not changing? How we measure that change must be technically robust and will depend on how the data is sourced and presented – e.g. Indicators sourced from surveys will often use something like statistically significant change. Indicators will also need to set a 'baseline year' (which is generally the beginning of the PfG mandate) from which progress can be compared and change determined. Departmental statisticians will advise on this, and criteria for change for each Indicator will be agreed by the Technical Assessment Panel before the Indicator is approved for use in the PfG.

- 4. Will action plans be developed under each outcome, or departmentally, and will they be consulted upon?**

The Executive is aiming to have a final version of the Outcomes Framework by around the end of April. Once finalised, we will work with departments and Outcome teams to develop action plans to help deliver the PfG, before the launch of the live Programme by the summer. As a 'live' programme, what is published by the summer is not the end product nor the end of the process. The Programme will be maintained in a live format, it will change and evolve responding to changing circumstances and needs. It will always be open to new ideas and ways of working, with citizen engagement, co-design and co-production at the core. As such, consultation and engagement will never end.

- 5. Young people spend as much time out school as in it, and as the pandemic has shown how they are enabled to use this time effectively for their health and wellbeing is important, yet it is the most neglected area of education - specifically voluntary/community sector provision as this is the most common provision, particularly in rural areas.**

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- 6. The absence of any mention of the 'wellbeing of the family' is a concern. Children and adults mostly live-in families and this context is crucial when looking at all aspects of life. Should this context be included in the PfG?**

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- 7. Has the NICS undertaken a learning exercise related to the previous draft PfG to inform thinking? What have been the lessons learned?**

Yes. We have learnt a lot since we began our journey in moving to an Outcomes based approach to working back in 2015, and much of this was used to inform our thinking in the development of the new PfG draft Outcomes Framework.

We considered research conducted in 2018 and 19 into the perceptions of Outcomes to ask people what they thought about Northern Ireland's position in relation to each of the outcomes developed as part of the 2016 draft framework. This research told us which outcomes people agreed with, which they disagreed with and also those which were not well understood.

In 2015, "What matters most" research conducted by NISRA was used as the basis for developing the 2016 draft Outcomes. This research told us what issues concerned people most in their day to day lives and how they would like government to act on these issues. As

part of the development work for the new draft Outcomes Framework, NISRA conducted similar research with a series of focus groups to find out if the same issues matter to citizens today and again how they would like to see Government act on them today.

We held a series of initial engagement events in October 2020 with internal officials and external stakeholders. Feedback from these events reinforced the importance of keeping things simple, clarity of language, collaboration and using data to help identify and tackle areas of inequality.

Our experience has also shown us that the previous approach of having individual Indicator delivery plans led to Indicators being viewed as targets rather than as measures of our direction of travel in achieving Outcomes. While Indicators remain important and significant measurements in the application of an Outcomes based PfG, we have sought to move the general focus towards actions and impact this time around.

We are currently in the process of undertaking an independent review of the PfG governance structures to see how we can build on and improve the structures we previously had in place in terms of Outcome Ownership.

- 8. Whilst it's encouraging that the draft PfG references housing - the reality for Housing support providers and the Supporting People Programme is that we are now facing 15 years of no inflationary uplift and are facing a staffing recruitment and retention crisis and when demand is likely to skyrocket as a result of Covid.**

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- 9. Recognising that national statistics are a central element of OBA in terms of measuring change, has any thought been given to the establishment of a research strand to fast-track information gaps in key areas? This is essential to ensure that critical issues are not lost due to a lack of statistical baselines.**

Considering the right data to measure progress towards an outcome can generate a need for more information which is not readily available. These data can be added to the PfG 'data development agenda' and work can begin to identify or develop a source for this information and publish it.

Whilst there are no specific plans to establish a PfG research strand at this early stage, there has been some use of the Administrative Data Research Centre NI <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/research-support/administrative-data-research-northern-ireland-adr-ni> to examine specific issues/gaps/challenges.

- 10. Is there a specific 'Housing' Outcome as per the 2020 Draft PfG?**

Housing was not previously included as a stand-alone Outcome. In the refreshed PfG draft Outcomes Framework, housing features as a Key Priority Area across a number of Outcomes to highlight the significance of the issue in terms of how it can impact across a wide range of aspects of life and to give it prominence as an issue the Executive is committed to addressing in the PfG.

11. What advice do you have for 'on the ground' organisations about their own use of outcome measurement tools - especially linked to proving achievement of the PfG aims linked to on-going funding?

There are a number of training materials available for organisations to look at in respect of outcomes-based working. The key is that we focus on "how much do we do, how well did we do it and is anyone better off?" Once the PfG is finalised, our aim is to include links to relevant guidance and case studies showing real life examples on Outcomes Based working in action on our webpages.

12. How will collaboration be measured?

The new PfG Monitoring and Reporting webpages on the NI Executive website will be used to display information about the actions and programmes being put in place by Outcome Teams to help achieve the desired Outcomes, including those being brought forward by delivery partners. There will also be narrative explanations about the background to the actions and how collaborative working practices are being used to ensure a joined-up approach. It is intended also to use the PfG webpages to showcase the outcomes-based approach including good-practice examples of collaboration, with a view to inspiring and encouraging collaboration across all sectors and to demonstrate how everyone can play a part in contributing to PfG Outcomes.

13. Is OBA still the measurement tool? How will you ensure that you capture where the statistics can show improvements and yet hide widening inequalities?

Yes, OBA is the methodology we will apply. The intention is that indicator data will be disaggregated, where relevant and possible, by S75 groups to enable us to identify where inequalities exist and take action to close the gaps.

14. Greater levels of poverty and disadvantage will affect the least well off and the most marginalised as we rebuild our society after COVID. The draft framework does not address this enough. Can we influence the final DfP to focus more on this major issue?

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15. Can TEO officials advise if consideration will be given to Housing as a standalone outcome, in line with the commitment contained in the NDNA document, and if not, can they outline their rationale for its absence?

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16. What efforts are being made to improve the quality and availability of data to improve our ability to monitor impact?

We are seeking to boost sample sizes in surveys to allow disaggregation by smaller groups and increasing investment in statistical resource within departments. We also intend to publish all Indicator data on new dedicated PfG webpages on the NI Executive website, where publication of action performance measures will also be published (where available).

17. Are any safeguards in place to ensure that successful indicators do not undermine and damage each other? For example, economic growth that does not take into account sustainability and need for carbon neutrality.

We are proposing a suite of Indicators that is finalised post consultation to ensure balance within and across Outcomes - i.e. technically approved one by one but only finalised as a balanced suite.

18. How and when will individual departments assess current funding programmes to align with the PfG outcomes?

The PfG being brought forward by the summer, will incorporate a budget for 2021/22. Departmental budgets should be prioritised towards those actions that contribute most towards the Outcomes. TEO is working with finance colleagues in DoF to better align budget and PfG processes from 2022 onwards, based on the agreed Outcomes Framework.

19. Have the Deaf Community, the Blind Community and the Deaf/Blind Communities been directly involved in the framework?

In preparing for the public consultation, officials sought advice from RNIB and RNID in relation to accessibility of our documents. No specific organisations were involved in the initial development of the draft Framework, however RNIB and RNID (Action on Hearing Loss) have received direct communications from us, as part of our out-reach to key partners and stakeholders, inviting them to take part in the consultation. The intention is that this is a starting point – we would ask that as many people/organisations as possible to respond to our consultation. The Executive is committed to making this a Programme that is developed with citizen engagement and co-design and co-production at the core. We want people to tell us what they think so that we can shape this into a PfG that meets the needs of everyone and tackles the inequalities that exist to improve wellbeing for society as a whole.

20. Are there any plans to improve data collection in NI?

The intention is that Indicator data will be disaggregated, where relevant and possible, by S75 groups to enable us to identify where inequalities exist and take action to close the gaps.

21. Has any thought been given to restructuring government departments which are organised along functional lines to outcomes-based structures?

This is something that will take time to achieve as it will require a complete change to the government structure in Northern Ireland. For now, we are considering how we best use existing structures to support the achievement of Outcomes. As a first step, work is currently underway to consider how we can develop our approach to departmental business planning to better link in with the Outcomes. We are also in the process of finalising an independent review of the PfG governance structures to see how we can build on and improve those we previously had in place in terms of Outcome Ownership.

22. Will there be another formal consultation exercise once a PfG document has been formed, including action plans, strategy etc?

The Executive is aiming to have a final version of the Outcomes Framework by around the end of April. Once finalised, we will work with departments and Outcome teams to develop action plans to help deliver the PfG before the launch of the live Programme by the summer. As a 'live' programme, what is published by the summer is not the end product nor the end of the process. The Programme will be maintained in a live format, it will change and evolve responding to changing circumstances and needs. It will always be open to new ideas and ways of working, with citizen engagement, co-design and co-production at the core. As such, consultation and engagement will never end.

23. Is the PFG relevant to arm's length bodies such as the Education Authority? How will the PFG affect the plans of organisations such as these?

Yes, the PfG is most certainly relevant to Arms Lengths Bodies as important delivery partners. One of the key aspects to the Outcomes based approach is collaboration and partnership working. Government cannot do all that is required to improve societal wellbeing, on its own. Real and effective change requires working across not only departmental and organisational boundaries, but across sectors and with civic society as a whole. We need to work together to identify the key issues and ensure we are all focused on the right actions that will make a real difference. Our ultimate aim that the PfG Framework will provide a common set of Outcomes which we will all strive to achieve for the good of society.

24. Many organisations believe the SDGs should be the foundation of the PfG. To what extent will the PfG reflect the SDGs?

The intention is that the Outcomes Framework will be our way to demonstrate progress towards the achievement of SDGs.

**25. How does the OBA report card account for changes that require more long-term changes?
Not all impact can be measured in the short term.**

The use of OBA Report Cards (presenting information in relation to How Much? How Well? Better off?) allows a flexible approach to the measurement of impact. e.g. some information may be provided as narrative, and the reporting schedule can be specific to the intervention.

26. How will the PfG team be working with NISRA to get to the lowest denominator / indicator of all S75?

The Programme for Government team incorporates a team of NISRA statisticians seconded to The Executive Office with the objective of providing specific PfG analytical support. This team will be working closely with statisticians in each Department to facilitate PfG reporting at both population (Indicator) and performance (project-specific) level. It is widely recognised that there is a need to provide Indicator data which is sufficiently disaggregated to allow for the identification of inequalities. Survey samples have been boosted to facilitate this and statisticians are encouraged to provide data broken down by S75 (and, indeed other sub populations) when at all possible.

27. What investment is being made in developing the skills and culture necessary to support the shift to an outcomes approach - technical application of OBA, use of data, collaborative working etc?

This is something that will take time to achieve. NICS is currently considering how we can develop our approach to departmental business planning to better link in with the Outcomes and we have already taken the first step in incorporating this approach into our economic appraisal processes. We are also in the final stages of an independent review of the PfG governance structures, which also looked at leadership, culture change and skills development as areas to help embed the Outcomes approach into our everyday way of working. The PfG webpages on the NI Executive will be used to showcase good-practice examples of outcomes-based working and we are looking at making training resources about PfG and outcomes-based working available online. It is very important that delivery partners understand how to engage with and contribute to the PfG and that people have the skills needed to do that effectively. We will monitor this moving forward and will work closely with Outcome Teams and partners to ensure appropriate support is in place.

28. Will Outcomes consider other high-profile reports and reviews such as Sir John Gillens report on Civil & Private law and the recommendations that flow from that in 2017 with specific reference to private family law system that is not working in terms of the well-being and rights of children when parents separate? This is a current, live societal issue.

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29. In relation to the PfG, how has welfare reform been factored into each outcome, for example 'reaching your potential, which we would agree will be impacted by poverty, access to benefits and contributes towards the ability to reach potential?

The Outcomes in the draft Framework are intended to present a picture of the kind of society the Executive want to see. An inclusive society in which people of all ages and backgrounds are respected and cared for and in which we all prosper. A society which has no barriers to prevent people from living fulfilling lives. We are also currently running an EQIA consultation to detail how the Framework will provide a basis to address the inequalities experienced by section 75 groups and we would really like to hear your views on this too.