Outcomes Based Accountability™ (OBA)

Outcomes Based Accountability™ (OBA) is a particular approach to planning and delivering outcomes created by Mark Friedman. See www.raguide.org for full information.

OBA uses a specific language and identifies two different types of accountability: one for planning and commissioning actions to move towards better wellbeing for everyone; and another level for delivering the actions as planned.

OBA is important because it is the methodology of the Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government for 2016 to 2021. Over time it will be applied to all public services and funding.

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Outcomes are defined as *conditions of wellbeing for <u>whole</u> populations*

For example, Outcome 7 in the Draft Programme for Government is *"We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other."*

Outcomes are so big and complex that they cannot be delivered by one project, agent or even the government alone. So it would be unreasonable to hold a single programme or department accountable for delivering an outcome. Instead they are achieved by many partners working together.

Therefore OBA has two distinct types of **accountability**:

1 - Population Accountability: for the wellbeing of whole populations, all the people in that community whether or not they use the service.

This accountability sits with collaborations or partnerships not individual departments or agencies.

In OBA, the partners plan to create outcomes by asking seven 'Population Accountability' questions. These identify the key factors behind the outcome, how they can be changed and what figures will show when they are changing. These figures are called Indicators.

> **Indicators:** Because outcomes are complex *(eg We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other)* they cannot be measured directly. Instead they are mapped through indicators *(eg % of the population who were victims of any crime.)* A basket of indicators is used to capture different aspects of the outcome.

This co-design approach creates a clear delivery plan of the many actions that will help to change the indicator statistics. This change is called *turning the curve* because the indicators are shown as a line on a graph and it should change shape if the action plan works (eg the *% who are victims of crime graph* should curve downwards.)

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Delivering the actions in the plan is the job of many different partners. Some will be voluntary groups using grants or contracts to run projects.

These projects will <u>not</u> create the big outcome, but will make a contribution towards reaching it.

Projects will most probably not move an indicator directly *(eg they will <u>not</u> directly stop people being victims of crime),* but they will change some of the key factors that make being a victim less likely *(eg increasing people's knowledge of how to keep themselves or their homes safe.)*

Projects are held responsible through the second sort of accountability.

2. Performance Accountability: for how effectively programmes or agencies stimulate the wellbeing of their own *client populations. 'Clients'* means users, participants, trainees etc.

This accountability sits with the individual agency or group delivering the work.

In OBA, when an organisation is planning to deliver projects, it asks seven 'Performance Accountability' questions. These identify who has a role to play, how clients will benefit and how services can be delivered well . The figures used to monitor service deliver are called Performance Measures show that are called indicators.

> **Performance Measures:** These track how much effort the organisation put in, whether it was good quality effort and if any of their clients are better off as a result.

> 1) **Effort** : *How much did the project do?*
> This is always a number (#) and is usually about inputs and outputs. This is the least important group of measures.

> 2) **Effort** : *How well did the project do it?*
> This is always a percentage (%) and is about the quality of the work or the inputs used when doing it.

> 3) **Effect** : How many clients are better off as a result of being involved?
> This is always a number(#) and is about the beneficial changes made to people.

> 4) **Effect** : What proportion of all clients are better off as a result of being involved?
> This is always a percentage (%) and is the answer to 3) divided by the total number of clients. This is the most important group of Performance Measure.

These Performance Measures are presented in two columns Quantity and Quality; and two rows Effort and Effect. The line between the two bottom boxes (quadrants) disappears because the same thing is being presented.

	Quantity	**Quality**
Effort	1) How much did you do? #	2) How well did you do it? %
Effect	3) and 4) Is anyone better off? # and %	

For small projects there will be just two or three measures in each of the three areas. That is six to ten measures over all. Choose measures you can collect within the time and resources available.

The ways in which clients are better off should make some contribution to creating conditions in which it is more likely that the big Population Outcome will be achieved in the long run.

Performance Measures: types of measures for each quadrant

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
# **Customers served** (by customer characteristic) **#** **Activities** (by type of activity)	**%** **Common measures** Workload ratio, staff turnover rate, staff morale, percent of staff fully trained, worker safety, unit cost, customer satisfaction: *Did we treat you well?* **%** **Activity-specific measures** Percent of actions timely and correct, percent customers completing activity, percent of actions meeting standards

Is anyone better off?	
# **#** **#** **#**	**%** **Skills / Knowledge** (e.g. parenting skills) **%** **Attitude / Opinion** including customer satisfaction: *Did we help you with your problems?* **%** **Behavior** (e.g. school attendance) **%** **Circumstance** (e.g. working, in stable housing)

Remember – the 'better off' measures are of the same thing

Example

You engaged 50 young people and 20. Of these 35 said they would recommend the course a mate. And 45 said it changed their awareness of the effects of anti-social behaviour on others.

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	# 50 people took part	% 70% would recommend course to a friend
Effect	# and % 45 people being	90% of the total said the course made them more aware of how anti-social behaviour could have bad effects on other people/

An imaginary example

The PCSP **Outcome** to which this project will make a contribution is "People have less fear of crime."

This project **makes people better off** by informing them about the real likelihood of being a victim of crime, how to reduce their chances even further by taking simple precautions and how to get help and reduce impact should crime occur.

Our **Performance Measures** will be:

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	# people spoken to	% of people said our staff were polite
	# towns covered	% of people who would recommend to a friend
Effect	# and % of people who said they learned something about crime or prevention	
	# and % of people who said they felt less concerned about the effect crime might have on them than before	

Collecting the information

Performance Measure	Data collection tools
# people spoken to # towns covered	Register for events and records of appointments
% of people said our staff were polite % of people who would recommend to a friend	Questionnaire handed out at events / posted out after visits
# and % of people who said they learned something about crime or prevention	
# and % of people who said they felt less concerned about the effect crime might have on them than before	

If you need resources to collect the information then include this in you budget. (eg printing, stamps, freepost address, online survey, volunteer researcher expenses)

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