

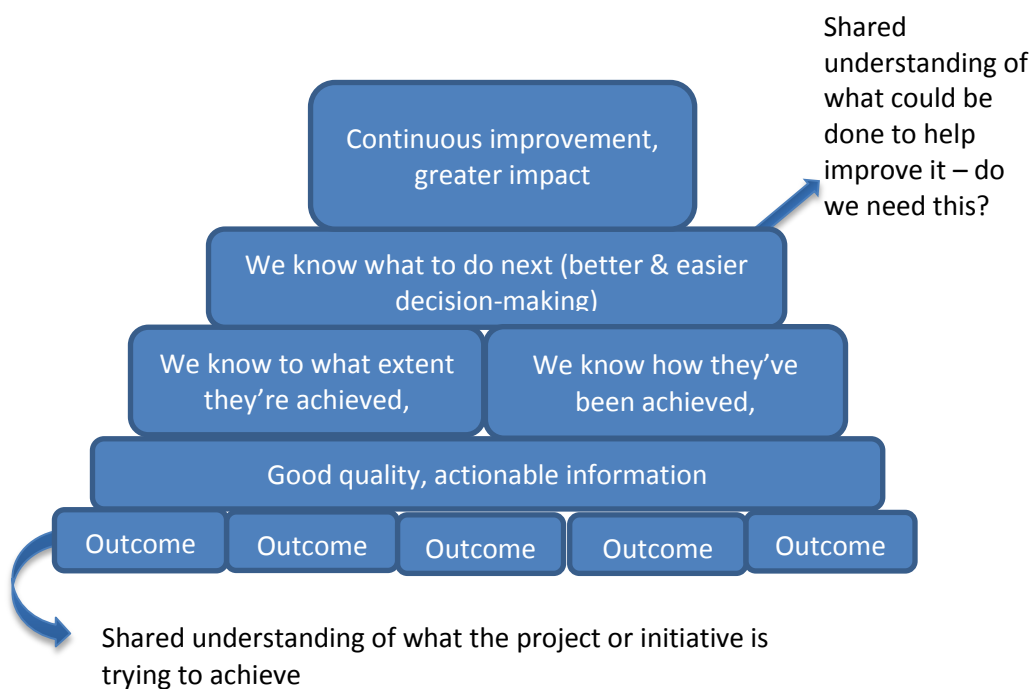
# Defining Good Outcomes

## A Guide to using outcomes to support improvement in education

### What does a good outcome do?

To improve what you do, you need the right information - information which tells you to what extent an activity is having a positive impact.

Well-defined outcomes are the foundation for that information. It's their job to tell us: who will change, what will change, and how it will change. They also need to be achievable, measurable and specific. If they have these features they'll help you get the right information in place which can help steer continuous improvement.



An outcome which isn't doing its job will mean that the information won't be good enough to steer improvement. Some of the consequences of poor outcomes include:



## What does a good outcome look like?

### 1. It tells us **who is going to experience change**

This might be teaching or non-teaching staff, learners, parents/carers who are experiencing the change..

Examples: Parents directly engaging with the activity, Teachers attending the CLPL  
Learners using the new resource

### 2. It tells us **what change they experience**

#### ...in the short term....

In general people have to think, understand or believe something first, before they change what they do. So short term outcomes usually describe changes that happen to their knowledge, awareness, understanding, thinking, skills, attitude, perception, opinion, aspirations or skills.

These changes can happen immediately after or during an activity – so they're 'short term' outcomes.

#### ....or the medium term

What changes happen next? Once thinking or understanding has shifted, you might expect to see changes to what they do, such as their practice, actions, behaviour, policies, processes, written content, decision-making, relationships or partnerships. For example, they might collaborate more, with different people, or the focus of collaboration changes. It's likely these changes take place in the medium or long term - which means they happen further away from the activity.

#### ...or the long term...

Who and what changes in the long term might relate (but not always) to a different group of people. For example, changes to teaching approaches (medium term) might lead to changes in experience for learners (longer term).

### 3. It tells us **HOW things will change**

Things can change in any number of ways: increasing or decreasing, raised, lowered, enhanced, improved, higher quality, more effective and so on.

### 4. It's **achievable, within a timeframe and is specific and measurable**

In order to check if an outcome is achievable it can be helpful to ask, is it plausible that the activity could have contributed to or caused the change?

To check this is the case, it might help to brainstorm:

- WHY the outcome isn't happening at the moment (is the activity addressing all of these factors?)

- what does the activity look like, who's involved, what is being discussed etc – how does this help achieve the outcome?

It is useful to consider a time period rather than a fixed date – for example some may have opportunities to put something into practice sooner than others.

It's really important everyone knows what an outcome will look like when it is achieved. Getting everyone together to agree what the outcome looks like when it's achieved/not achieved will help tell you how to measure it. This discussion can also help build a shared understanding and collective purpose, and help you interpret the information once it's gathered.

