



Achieving Community Justice Outcomes

**Targeted resource to support
national outcome
improvement delivery in
local authority areas**

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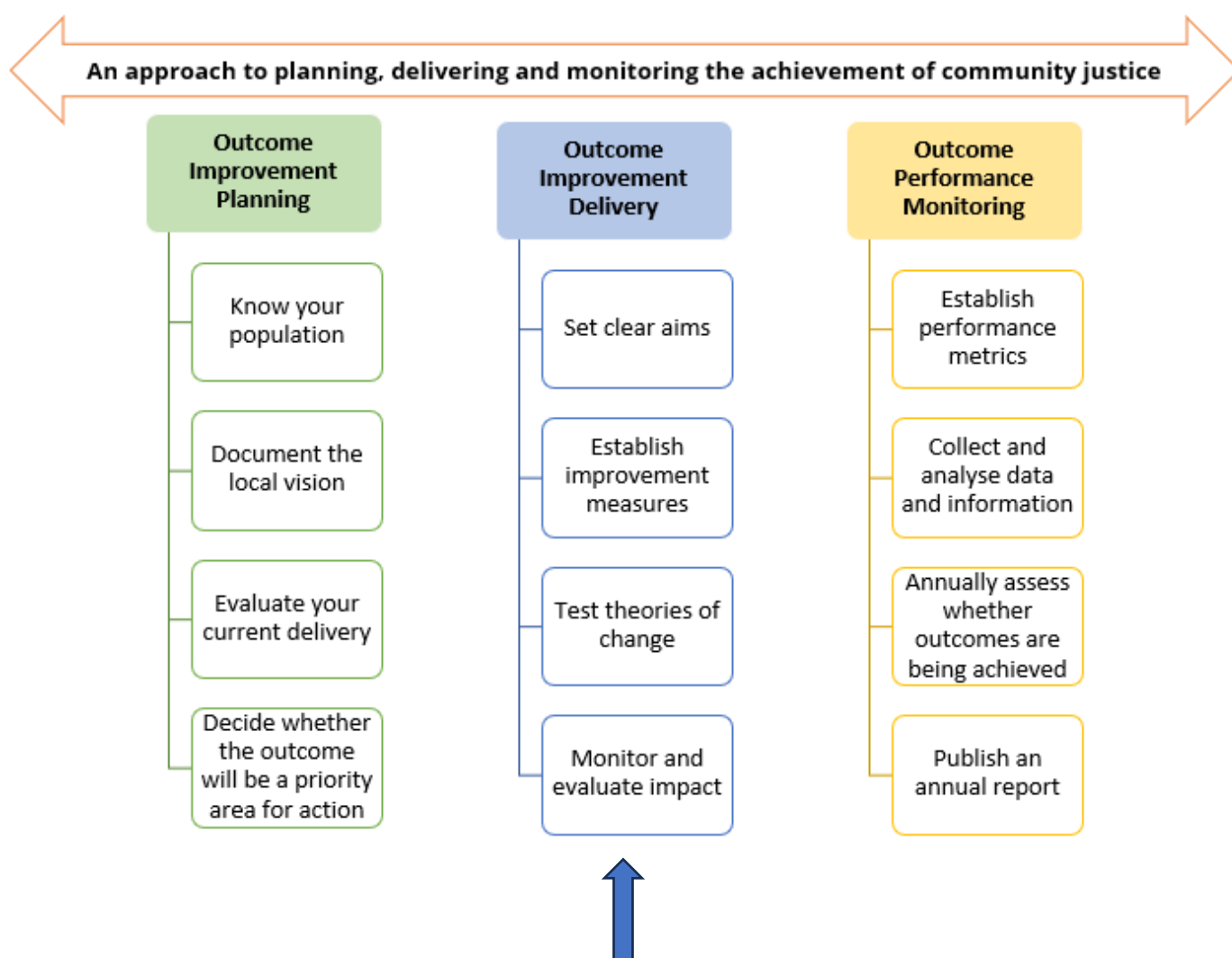
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Outcome improvement delivery

An approach to support partners in the planning, delivery and monitoring of community justice outcomes in local authority areas was published in June 2024. The approach is intended to provide community justice partners, acting jointly at a local level, with a practical framework to work within to plan, deliver and monitor outcome delivery.

The approach methodology defines three **processes** to meet this aim, each with a distinct number of steps:



This targeted resource focuses on the second process within the approach: **outcome improvement delivery**.

This is a resource to support community justice partnerships deliver improvement activity in their local area. It aims to support partnerships develop delivery plans through identifying improvement aims and measures from their prioritised national and local outcomes, and test out their improvement activity through a controlled improvement cycle.

Constructing a delivery plan should occur once the partnership has gathered a range of evidence to help them identify the national and local outcomes that require action during the lifespan of their community justice outcomes improvement plan (CJOIP). Once partners have completed the outcome improvement planning process (above), they should have a clear understanding of the priority

outcomes for the local area. They should also have a sense of what the current gaps or issues are in regard to the delivery of a specific outcome. The delivery plan is about identifying the improvement activities that will be undertaken to help partners to plug that practice gap and move closer to achieving their strategic aims and ambitions.

What is a delivery plan and why is it needed?

A delivery plan sets out what it is you are going to do, who is going to do it, and how you will measure what is being done. The delivery plan is usually a high-level document which outlines the improvement activities that are to be undertaken and provides a measure of what will happen in the short, medium, and long-term. Delivery plans should underpin the strategic intention set out in the local area CJOIP.

To produce a delivery plan, you must first identify a set of improvement activities. During the development and delivery of improvement activities, partnerships should ensure that they have:

- ◆ Engagement from the right people
- ◆ An in depth understanding of the current issue/problem
- ◆ A clear aim statement
- ◆ A clear link between local and national objectives
- ◆ An appropriate and well utilised communication plan for the improvement work
- ◆ An agreed plan for how the activity will be carried out and monitored

When determining improvement activities, the following things should be considered and documented:

- ◆ **Why** the improvement activity is being undertaken (Justification)
- ◆ **What** the improvement activity entails (Scope)
- ◆ **What** the activity will deliver (Deliverables) or achieve (outcomes)
- ◆ **When** the activity will begin and end (Timeline)
- ◆ **Who** is required to do **What, When**
- ◆ **What** the potential unintended consequences might be and **How** they will be identified and managed (Risk Management)
- ◆ **What** success looks like (benefits) and **How** success will be measured (Measure of Impact)

In order to incorporate these questions, partners might want to consider utilising the Model for Improvement approach¹ which will help them to develop, drive and monitor improvement activity. The approach seeks to answer three main questions:

- ◆ **Setting Aims:** What are you going to improve, and by how much?
- ◆ **Establishing Measures:** How will you know if the change is an improvement?
- ◆ **Testing theories of change through Plan/Do/Study/Act (PDSA) cycle:** What changes can you make which will lead to the improvement?

¹ [How to Improve: Model for Improvement | Institute for Healthcare Improvement \(ihi.org\)](https://www.ihl.org.uk/how-to-improve-model-for-improvement)



Step 1 – Set clear aims

What are you going to improve, and by how much?

According to the Model for Improvement², setting clear aims is an essential starting point to setting an improvement action. The first step within this process is to agree with partners on what the aim should be, as this allows the allocation of people and resources necessary to achieve the aim.

Elements of an effective aim include:

- ◆ **What** are we improving?
- ◆ **By what date and how much we want to improve:** Time-bound and measurable (how much? By when?)
- ◆ **For / with whom are we doing this work:** Define the population whose lives will be affected by the improvement action
- ◆ **Where** the improvement is taking place.

Partners will have identified and prioritised certain community justice national and local outcomes which they believe need to be improved. Once they have prioritised the outcomes in terms of short, medium and long-term priorities, the partners will need to identify the current operational issues which may be impacting on outcome delivery. Much of this work will have been done previously in the planning phase by looking at the national outcome logic models and identifying gaps in current practice.

Once the gaps in practice have been identified, the next step is for partners to discuss and agree what they aim to do in order to address the issue. Some top tips to be considered when creating an aim are detailed below.

Tips for setting an aim

- ◆ **Co-design the aim:** Ensure that those who will benefit from the improvement are part of the process of defining the aims. This might include lived/living experienced individuals, statutory and non-statutory organisations and any other relevant community partners and or stakeholders.
- ◆ **Choose aims which explicitly close equity gaps:** Identify any groups or individuals which may be experiencing different outcomes than others. Try to address any equality and equity gaps through the improvement activity. Remember, to close equity gaps, some populations may need specific attention to ensure equality for all.
- ◆ **State the aim clearly:** Make sure the aim of the improvement activity is agreed by all partners and is clear. Often creating an aim statement can be a good way of generating consensus and clarity with partners.
- ◆ **Include numerical goals where possible:** Often aims can be quite ambiguous, setting numerical aims and being realistic with them can help to keep the aims very focused and achievable.
- ◆ **Set stretch goals:** A 'stretch' goal is one to meet within a specific timeframe. For example, "we will increase police training on completing antecedent reports by 20% by the 29th of April 2025".

² [How to Improve: Model for Improvement | Institute for Healthcare Improvement \(ihi.org\)](https://www.ihimodel.org/)

Doing this ensures that practice cannot stay the same and that progress in a certain area must be met.

- ◆ **Be cautious of aim drift:** Often partners may assess the aim they agreed upon to check its continued relevancy. This process is good practice, however, try to avoid generalising the aim to suit. The initial stretch goals should be kept in mind and if the partnership want to alter the initial aim, the rationale for doing this should be clear and justified.

While this method offers one approach to setting aims, partners may want to consider alternative methods which may be better suited to their own partnership.

For additional guidance on setting aims, through this approach please refer to the following resource:

- ◆ [How to set clear aims](#)



Step 2 – Establish improvement measures

How will you know if the change is an improvement?

After setting the aims, partnerships will want to establish measures for these aims as it allows partners to track progress and to monitor if the theory of change in place is having the intended impact.

According to the model for improvement³, there are usually three types of measures which are most commonly used at this stage. This includes outcome, process and balancing measures.

- ◆ **Outcome measures:** This measure is used to indicate if the improvement action has had the intended result the partnership would have liked to see. For an outcome measure, partners might want to think about linking back to their numerical goal established in their aim statement. E.g. The outcome measure for progress towards meeting national outcome 1 (More people successfully complete diversion from prosecution) might be to have 20% of police refreshed in their training of completing antecedents reports by April 2025.
- ◆ **Process measures:** These are intermittent measures put in place to monitor if the outcome is likely to be achieved. For example, if the outcome measure is to have 20% of all police force trained in completing antecedents part of an arrest report by April 2025, you might have a process measure of “10% of police will be trained by November 2024”.
- ◆ **Balancing Measures:** Partners should consider if the action and outcome they are striving for is not going to unintentionally have an impact on other parts of the system.

Again, this is one way of defining measures and partnerships may want to consider other definitions which may suit their way of working better.

For additional guidance on setting measures, through this approach please refer to the following resource:

- ◆ [Establishing Improvement Measures](#)

³ [How to Improve: Model for Improvement: Establishing Measures | Institute for Healthcare Improvement \(ihi.org\)](#)



Step 3 – Test theories of change

What changes can you make which will lead to the improvement?

One way we can test theories of change is through the Plan/Do/Study/Act cycle (PDSA).

The PDSA cycle is an approach used to achieve continuous improvement⁴. Often when we want to improve things, we may come up with new ideas and start using them even though it may not be having the intended impact the partnership requires. The PDSA cycle accepts the fact that not all ideas and actions will have the right impact but allows them to be tested in a controlled way. The following cycle aims to help partners to identify the actions which work and can be scaled up, and the ones which don't have the right impact and can be stopped⁵.

The PDSA cycle involves four key stages: Plan, Do, Study, and Act. Utilising the PDSA cycle allows partnerships to systematically plan, test, evaluate and adjust delivery plans to address gaps in current practice and support progress towards prioritised national and local outcomes.

Below is a step-by-step guide on how to apply the PDSA cycle. Going through the steps of the cycle should enable partnerships to develop an action plan for each issue they would like to address.

If partners would like to further their understanding of the PDSA cycle overall, below are a few links which will provide further detail on the approach.

- ◆ [PDSA Cycle](#)

Plan

Identify the Problem

Partners should initially aim to define the issue or challenge they aim to address for the delivery plan. This could be a gap in current practices, inefficiencies, or areas for improvement within the area they are prioritising. For example, partnerships may have identified diversion from prosecution as a national outcome to be prioritised in the short term and through comparing local practice to the national logic model, partners identified training to police officers on completing the antecedents part of the report as an area which could be improved upon. Therefore, they would create an aim (improvement action) to address this gap.

If partners have already worked through step 1 'The aim' in this resource, much of this work will already have been done and partners can lift the aim agreed and put it into the plan section of the PDSA cycle.

⁴ [How to Improve: Model for Improvement | Institute for Healthcare Improvement \(ihi.org\)](#)

⁵ [A practical guide to Model for Improvement and PDSA.pdf \(rcgp.org.uk\)](#)

Identify Facilitators & Barriers

It is important for community justice partners to understand what might help or hinder the successful delivery of outcome improvement plans. Facilitators which assist the delivery of outcomes might include the workforce, skills, technology, data or collaboration or legislation. Barriers involve things that might negatively impact achievement of the outcome and might include high costs, a lack of data, political or legislative changes and staff shortages.

Partners may want to consider utilising tools such as a driver diagram at this stage to visual map what will drive or contribute to the progress of the outcome they want to achieve. For more information on driver diagrams and an example of how to use one, partners can follow the link below.

- ◆ [Driver Diagram](#)

Set SMART Objectives

The activity identified in the planning process should be used as a basis for creating actions that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (SMART). All actions should be structured in a clear, concise and succinct way to provide clear instruction and set expectations about results.

For support in establishing SMART actions, please follow the link below to SMART action worksheet which coordinators may want to utilise when talking to their partners:

- ◆ [SMART action worksheets to download](#)

Specific

Ensure that the intended action set is clear and focused. When goals are broad or vague, they are easily overlooked and harder to measure or achieve. Some questions partners may want to consider include:

- ◆ What are the concrete steps in our plan?
- ◆ Who is necessary to make it happen?
- ◆ Where will our efforts take place?
- ◆ Why is this valuable to our long-term strategy?
- ◆ How do we prioritise this goal compared to other goals?⁶

Measurable

Measurable goals are essential for assessing performance and staying on track. Without measurable metrics, it can become difficult to progress or identify areas needing adjustment. Setting clear criteria allows for effective evaluation and keeps the proposed activity aligned with the objective. Some questions partners may want to consider include:

What data do we need? (This can be numerical data or insight data)

Where will our data and information be stored and how will we access it?

⁶ [What Are SMART Goals? Definition & Best Practices | Tableau](#)

Is our data and information reliable and verifiable?

What are reasonable milestones?

How much is enough and how much is not enough?

Achievable

Partners should aim to set realistic actions aligned with achievable objectives, avoiding overly ambitious targets that may be demotivating. While ambition is valuable, prioritise sustainable progress over unattainable aspirations. Some questions partners may want to consider include:

- ◆ What are the necessary steps to address the problem?
- ◆ How much direct control do we have to achieving this?
- ◆ Is this goal realistic compared to previous performance?

Realistic

Actions should be both realistic and relevant to drive improvement. Some questions partners may want to consider include:

- ◆ Does the action align with our overall strategic ambition?
- ◆ Why wasn't this part of current practice?
- ◆ How much will this change current practice, and do we have sufficient resource to deliver it?
- ◆ Is this action sustainable in the long term and do we have buy-in from the people affected by it?

Timebound

Time-bound actions establish deadlines or milestones to track progress, ensuring timely achievement. Whether setting specific end-points or monitoring progress over periods like daily, monthly, or quarterly, planning ahead is useful. It may help to align agreed indicators with time frames to effectively measure progress towards the specific action you have taken. Some questions partners may want to consider include:

- ◆ Is this achievable in the given time frame?
- ◆ What is the longest and shortest possible time to achieve this goal?
- ◆ What potential blockers or time-related factors could delay progress?
- ◆ What have we accomplished in similar time frames in the past and what can we learn from them?
- ◆ When and how will we check for progress?
- ◆ What do we do if we're off-track halfway through?
- ◆ Are there any times where progress might naturally slow down or speed up?

Develop a Plan

After creating SMART actions, the partnership may now want to brainstorm potential solutions and strategies to address the identified problem. Create a detailed plan outlining the actions you will take to implement these solutions. You may want to consider factors such as resource allocation, timelines, and responsibilities.

Guidance on some project management tools partners may want to consider when developing a plan are detailed and linked below:

- ◆ [GANTT Chart guidance](#). This link takes you to Microsoft support on how to make a GANTT chart. A GANTT chart is a tool which can help partners to schedule project tasks and visually help to track progress.
- ◆ [RACI Matrix](#). RACI is a project management acronym which stands for Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed. RACI can help to clarify roles and responsibilities for the project to help with achieving project success.

Do

Implement the plan of action

Put your delivery plan into action. Execute the activities and initiatives outlined in the plan according to the established timelines and responsibilities.

Document Changes

Keep detailed records of the changes made during the implementation phase. Document any challenges encountered, unexpected outcomes, or deviations from the original plan.

Study

Gather Data and Information

Collect relevant data, information and feedback to measure the impact of the delivery plan. Use quantitative and qualitative (this might include workforce and or lived experience insights) methods to analyse performance metrics, stakeholder input, and other relevant information.

Evaluate Results

Once the delivery plan has been implemented, assess its effectiveness in addressing the identified problem. Evaluate whether the objectives set in the planning phase have been met.

Identify Insights

Identify trends, patterns, and lessons learned from the evaluation process. Questions partners may want to consider at this stage include:

- ◆ What worked well?
- ◆ What could be improved?

Use these insights to inform decision-making in the next steps.

Act

Adjust and Refine

Based on the findings from the evaluation phase, make adjustments and refinements to the delivery plan as necessary. This may involve fine-tuning strategies, reallocating resources, implementing additional changes and or stopping with that action and trying out a different action point.

Consider standardising the approach

If the delivery plan proves successful, the partnership may want to consider standardising the improved processes or practices across the local area. Document best practices and establish protocols to ensure consistency and sustainability.

Communicate Results

Share the results of the delivery plan with stakeholders and team members. Celebrate successes, acknowledge challenges, and communicate any changes or improvements implemented as a result of the PDSA cycle.⁷

For further guidance on using the PDSA cycle, please follow the link below:

- ◆ [Guidance on PDSA Cycle](#)



Step 4 – Monitor and evaluate impact

Monitor Delivery Plans

After completing a PDSA cycle, it's crucial for partners to monitor the progress towards achieving the identified aim. This involves revisiting the outcome and process measures established initially and assessing if they are being met.

Evaluate Impact on Overall Outcomes

Once monitoring is done, partners should step back and evaluate if the actions taken have influenced the overall outcome they aim to achieve. For instance, if the goal is to increase diversion cases, partners might have identified specific gaps and formulated aims to address them. They should then assess whether successful actions, such as increasing police training on certain procedures, are positively impacting the desired outcome.

⁷ [What Are SMART Goals? Definition & Best Practices | Tableau](#)

Practice Example

Partners have identified increasing diversion cases as an overall outcome they want to achieve. From the planning stage they have identified five gaps in current practice that they would like to address within their delivery plans. From the delivery approach, they have created 5 aims which they believe will support in achieving this overall aim. One of those aims being to increase police training on completed antecedents reports for the procurator fiscals. They have monitored that aim through the measures they have set and assessed they are on track to having 20% of police officers in that area trained in how to do this by April 2025. Now partners will want to evaluate if this successful test of change is having a positive impact on the overall outcome (increase in number of diversion cases being successfully completed).

If partners find that their actions are not producing the desired impact on the overall outcome, it's essential to recognise that the chosen action might not be effective. In such cases, partners should be prepared to repeat the PDSA cycle with different actions until they find ones that effectively contribute to the desired outcome. This involves continuously monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of each action taken.

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Community Justice Scotland

R1 Spur, Saughton House,

Broomhouse Drive,

Edinburgh EH11 3XD

T: 0300 244 8420

www.communityjustice.scot

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