

# Measurement: evidence based service design and the theory of change...

E3M Alchemy

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children are free from disadvantage.

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# What do we mean by “social” ...

## Definitions from the GECES report

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[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/social\\_business/docs/expert-group/20131128-impact-measurement-subgroup\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/docs/expert-group/20131128-impact-measurement-subgroup_en.pdf)

Social	Relating to individuals and communities, and the interaction between them; contrasted with economic and environmental.
Social Outcome	Social effect (change), both long-term and short-term achieved for the target population as a result of the activity undertaken with a view to social change taking into account both positive and negative changes.
Social Impact	The reflection of social outcomes as measurements, both long-term and short-term, adjusted for the effects achieved by others (alternative attribution), for effects that would have happened anyway (deadweight), for negative consequences (displacement), and for effects declining over time (drop-off).



# 5 steps for Social Impact Measurement from EVPA guide and the GECES report

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# Measurement is...

.....not just for funders and funding, but for:

- Service improvement
- Framing and developing solutions
- Needs based positioning and focus for the organisation
- Mapping wider achievable impact and policy influence

Key to all is the story: not a process

So.....

....we need to understand how does change occur, and

....what is your part in achieving that

AND SO....what should we measure ?

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## Proposed Approaches to Social Impact Measurement



## About us

The Children's Society is a children's charity committed to helping children and young people facing disadvantage from poverty and neglect

We work across a range of thematic areas including child sexual exploitation, refugee and migrant children, children experiencing substance misuse, children missing from home, and children in the care system.

We have a blended approach in that we directly support young people through our practice work and indirectly through our policy and campaigning activity to challenge broader societal conditions.

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# A brief history of our 'impact journey'

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**Summer 2012** – New Chief Executive and almost completely new Senior Management Team

**Autumn 2012** – Transformation Programme begins, inc. Business Performance Impact project

**Spring 2013** – New strategy and three-year business plan launched

**Autumn 2013** – Strategy Group and Technical Impact Working Group both created

**November 2013** – Evidence and impact team established

**July 2014** – first annual Impact Report published

**October 2014** – strategy refresh and sharpening of outcomes

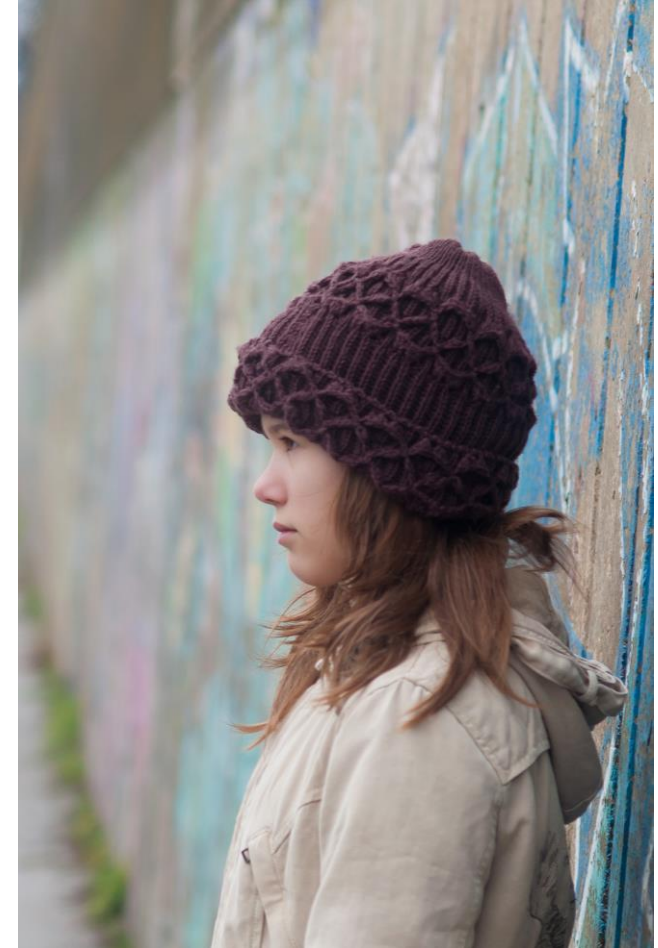
**July 2016** – third annual Impact Report published

## Many practical challenges remain

- Outcomes tools compliance is growing but slowly – is there a natural limit without greater performance management?
- Resource constraints have limited the expert support that we have been able to provide to delivery staff
- Delivery staff are getting used to new IT systems, usual teething troubles
- Transformation and change has inevitably led to quick a lot of staff turnover – each new member needs to understand approaches, training, expectations, culture

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# Many strategic challenges remain

- Attribution and impact challenges of social change.
- Counter-intuitive results. A backward shift in indicators may represent an overall positive change in the lives of the beneficiaries, and the ultimate change achievable
- The organisational focus on improving lives may mean culture resists the time challenge and importance of measurement
- The communication of impact remains a challenge

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# Emerging solutions

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## Measurement in this space is characterised by:

- Complex situation for individuals
- Set in a complex social setting
- With a need for complex interventions that “solve with”, rather than “solve for”

It is not a linear exit from these, meaning that linear measurement doesn't necessarily help.

## Solutions emerging include:

- Indicator menus
- Packaged indicator progress (....2 of 5....)
- “non-return” gateways (largely in PbR)

## Cultural change in funder environment:

- Gracious philanthropy, to
- Scientifically-based delivery of an outcome

## Practical points: where next ?

Building on these points, some practical takeaways for Castleville:

1. Use existing data-sets, frameworks, and tools where possible rather than building new ones. Saves time, already tested, and understood by others.
2. Think through very carefully the behaviours of measuring. How will things actually be used in practice, what are the practical constraints and how to make life simple. Add culture change and training alongside sticks!
3. Be proportionate and only measure what will be used. Don't assume that anti-measurement culture is necessarily wrong. The ethics of monitoring in complex social environments does require thinking through.

Ultimately, it will never be perfect, so do something, test it and improve. Create a learning environment.

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