



Briefing for families: Introducing Outcomes Measures into the Adoption Support Fund (ASF)

Since the ASF began in 2015, over £300m funding has supported around 45,000 children and young people, many of whom have received ongoing support through the Fund. Independent evaluation and feedback from the sector show it is having a positive impact on the lives of adoptive and eligible special guardianship families. However, there is currently no systematic way of measuring outcomes from ASF-funded interventions. The Department for Education (DfE) is therefore introducing outcome measurement tools to the ASF application process starting from 4 December 2023.

Introducing outcome measures into the ASF will lead to a better understanding of which therapies work best and help local authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies to provide the most effective support for adopted and special guardianship children, young people and families. By being involved, you will be helping to ensure that the support which children and families receive through the ASF is right for them and as effective as possible.

What is an outcome measurement tool?

Outcome measures are tools which practitioners can use to help understand the difficulties a child or young person is experiencing. They can help in identifying what is important, setting goals, and tracking progression towards those goals. They can also provide information that helps in making collaborative decisions about next steps in terms of support.

Introducing outcome measurement tools to the ASF

An outcome measurement tool is used to understand the impact and outcomes of therapy for the child or family receiving the service. Measurements are taken at the start of therapy and at the end. The five tools we are using for the ASF are all clinically-approved tools and have been identified following consultation with clinicians, local authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies. These tools are already used in many ASF-funded interventions and are recognised as good practice amongst practitioners.

The five outcome measurement tools are:

1. [Assessment Checklist \(AC\)](#)
2. [Brief Assessment Checklist \(BAC\)](#)
3. [Goal Based Outcome \(GBO\)](#)
4. [Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire \(SDQ\)](#)
5. [Thinking about your child \(TAYC-R\)](#)

What does this mean for families?

The introduction of outcome measurement tools in no way affects decisions about any application made to the ASF for your child or family. Applications will be processed in the usual way. The only difference is that, once any agreed therapy starts, one of the outcome measurement tools will be used at the beginning and end of therapy to measure progress.

As with the ASF application process, no identifying data about your child or family will be shared with DfE or their delivery partner Mott MacDonald (MM), who administers the fund. Local authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies are asked to choose one of the five tools as part of the application process. Your therapist providing the service will then use this tool at the beginning and end of the service that you receive.

Local authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies will collect this information from providers and submit this information to the ASF. All data shared with DfE and MM will be high-level numeric information and completely anonymous. The data will be aggregated with data from other applications.

The purpose of gathering this information is to start to build a picture about the overall impact of the ASF. The data collected will **not** be used by the Department or MM as criteria to determine whether specific therapy should in future be continued, or accepted in other cases. The data will be reviewed by DfE on a national level to provide insight into the overall impact of ASF-funded therapies on outcomes for children and families. If you do not wish for your high-level outcomes data to be provided, you can let your local authority or Regional Adoption Agency know and choose to opt out.

Further Information

Please contact your local authority or Regional Adoption Agency for further information about outcome measurement tools in the ASF process.