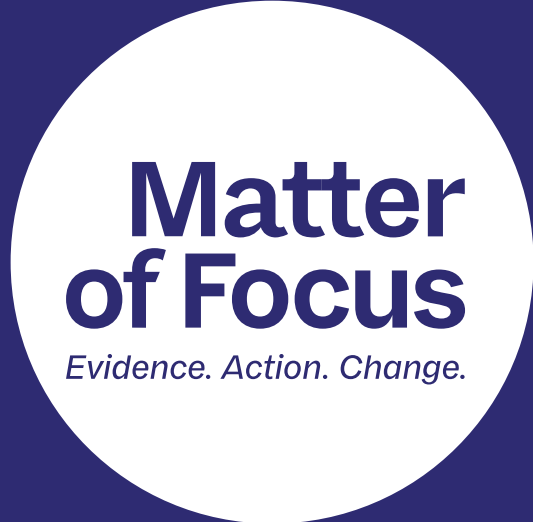


Building partnership capability and skills to track social outcomes:

learning from the development of the OutNav software system

Dr Ailsa Cook and Dr Sarah Morton, Matter of Focus



Helping public services track social outcomes

Tracking the impact and outcomes of complex public services is hard. Service evaluations often focus only on numbers that miss the full story, or get swamped by qualitative data with no way to use it well.

Using a theory-based approach to evaluation, such as contribution analysis helps mitigate these issues. It supports services to bring together qualitative and quantitative data to track and improve both process and outcomes.

Over the past eight years Matter of Focus has developed and refined OutNav, a software tool that supports public service organisations to track the process and outcomes of their work.

A robust and practical theory of change approach

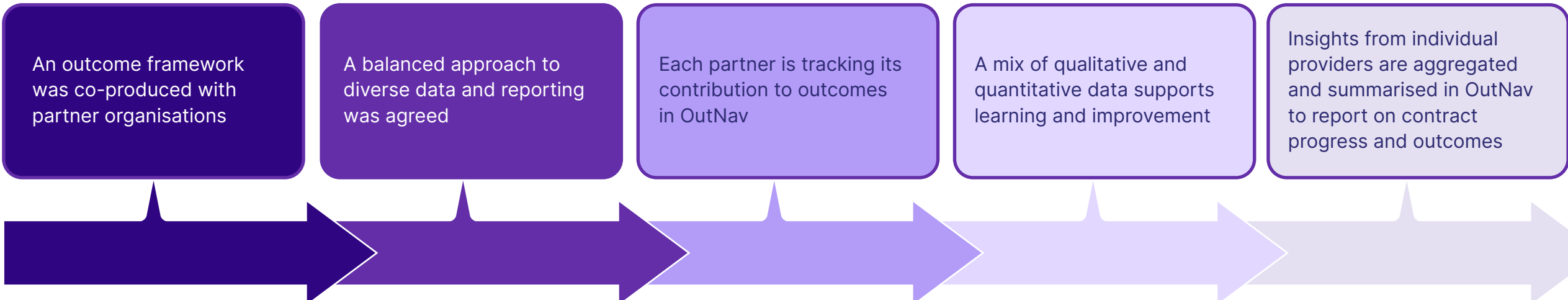
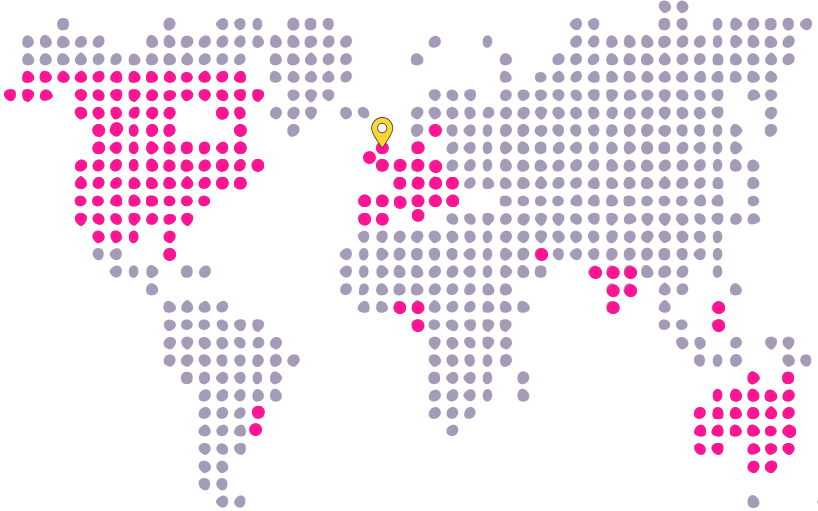
Using plain language headings, public service teams build outcome maps that break down the journey from activity to impact in a clear, shared way. This approach draws on contribution analysis, action research and deep experience in evaluating public services.

Outcome maps are central to the software, supporting planning, learning and reporting



Supporting public service organisations worldwide

Since its launch, over 200 organisations have used OutNav to track complex change, reflect on progress and report on outcomes. Learning and feedback from this real-world use has informed ongoing improvements. The tool supports diverse public service organisations and partnerships worldwide, from governments tracking policy impacts, to service providers, public bodies and academics.

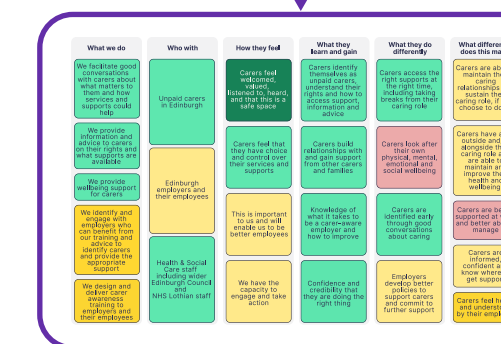
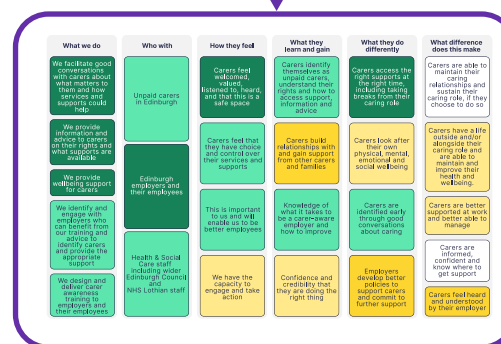
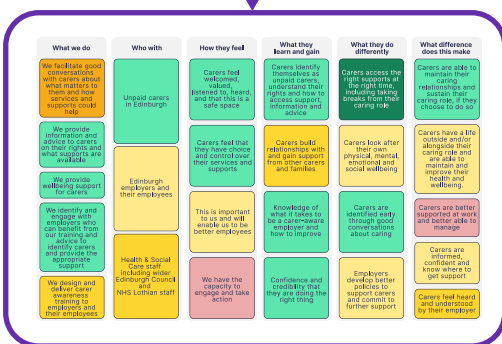


What we do	Who with	How they feel	What they learn and gain	What they do differently	What difference does this make
We facilitate good conversations with carers about what matters to them and how services and supports could help	Unpaid carers in Edinburgh	Carers feel welcomed, valued, listened to, heard, and that this is a safe space	Carers identify themselves as unpaid carers, understand their rights and how to access support, information and advice	Carers access the right supports at the right time, including taking breaks from their caring role	Carers are able to maintain their caring relationships and sustain their caring role, if they choose to do so
We provide information and advice to carers on their rights and what supports are available	Edinburgh employers and their employees	Carers feel that they have choice and control over their services and supports	Carers build relationships with and gain support from other carers and families	Carers look after their own physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing	Carers have a life outside and/or alongside their caring role and are able to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing
We provide wellbeing support for carers	Health & Social Care staff including wider Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian staff	This is important to us and will enable us to be better employees	Knowledge of what it takes to be a carer-aware employer and how to improve	Carers are identified early through good conversations about caring	Carers are better supported at work and better able to manage
We identify and engage with employers who can benefit from our training and advice to identify carers and provide the appropriate support		We have the capacity to engage and take action	Confidence and credibility that they are doing the right thing	Employers develop better policies to support carers and commit to further support	Carers are informed, confident and know where to get support
We design and deliver carer awareness training to employers and their employees					

Template outcome map

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Automated aggregate view for summary reporting



Edinburgh Unpaid Carers Partnership team members collectively tracking their progress with OutNav

Learning from the development process

Investing in building capacity and skills

Public service organisations value tracking the outcomes of their work, but often lack the time, skills and systems to do so. Access to specialist software like OutNav supports capacity and skills but organisations still need to dedicate capacity to this work to make progress.

Overcoming data challenges

Many organisations have limited access to quality data. OutNav helps overcome data issues by supporting the triangulation of multiple forms of data and guiding a consistent, robust approach to analysis. Visualising where data is stronger or weaker highlights where capacity can be focused to fill evidence gaps.

Improving efficiency with a single, co-ordinated system

Holding the outcomes framework, data, evidence, analysis and reports in one place creates significant efficiencies. It makes a co-ordinated approach to theory-based evaluation at scale possible.

Capturing learning is essential to making good progress

OutNav provides a single place for all reflection and learning. It ensures that the expertise of people delivering change and using services is captured in the evaluation process and used to improve outcomes.

Next steps

Embedding AI in an ethical, safe and effective way is the focus over the next year.

We know that the right software can address gaps in capability and skills, but organisational capacity challenges remain. AI brings exciting opportunities to streamline analysis tasks and deliver quick insights for organisations using it at scale.

We are keen to connect with other teams embedding AI in public services.

Please get in touch

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