INSPIRING IMPACT

The future of shared measurement

A guide to assessing individual sector readiness

July 2014

NPC

Inspiring Impact

Inspiring Impact is a programme that aims to change the way the UK voluntary sector thinks about impact and make high quality impact measurement the norm for charities and social enterprises by 2022.

Over the next decade we will work towards five key objectives under five themes, answering the key questions for the sector:

- What does good impact measurement look like?
- How do we know what we need to measure?
- How do we measure it?
- How can we compare with and learn from others?
- What's the role for funders?

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Executive summary

The acknowledgment that impact measurement can transform the effectiveness of a charity has led many to embrace it. However, all too often, different charities working to tackle the same problems or achieve the same outcomes are measuring their impact in different ways.

This state of play works against the full potential of impact measurement. Shared measurement—the use of common measurement tools by more than one organisation—reduces the duplication of effort in developing bespoke impact measurement tools, allowing charities to focus their resources more efficiently. By measuring consistently we can compare information between organisations that will help us understand what works and why, not forgetting that the process is as valuable as the product—for the engagement and collaboration it requires can help build shared action in sectors.

This report reviews developments in shared measurement following the publication of Inspiring Impact's *Blueprint for shared measurement* and identifies opportunities for embedding shared measurement approaches in new sectors.

What have we learnt?

As impact measurement increases in priority for charities, shared measurement is also becoming more prominent. A number of new shared measurement approaches are now available, including Inspiring Impact's own *Journey to EmploymenT (JET) framework*.

The benefits of shared measurement include fostering closer collaboration between charities, promoting sharing and learning within a sector and generating greater understanding for funders of their impact. But there is some need for caution: organisations are wary of funders setting up shared measurement systems for a number of reasons, and they need to allow for the fair comparison of services.

Assessing readiness

Shared measurement may not be appropriate for every charitable sector. To help different sectors focus on genuine opportunities for shared measurement, we have developed an assessment framework for understanding the drivers and barriers to shared measurement. This framework sets criteria which can be used to review and grade sectors based on three core factors: the sector and its infrastructure; current evidence and measurement approaches; and the momentum for shared measurement.

Next steps

Effective shared measurement depends on time, resource and commitment from the organisations involved. Crucially, it requires sectors to collaborate and share in new ways, which can take time and a change in culture.

Charities, funders, researchers and evaluators all have a role to play in ensuring the potential of shared measurement is realised. Membership and infrastructure organisations could take the lead in exploring the sector's readiness for shared measurement, using our assessment framework as a guide. Funders with a strategic interest in a specific sector could consider if they are willing to support the development of shared measurement approaches for their grantees. And evaluators and researchers could prioritise shared measurement systems in the commissioning and design of evaluations.

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Introduction

Impact measurement has a vital role in helping charities become more effective. Through impact measurement, organisations can review what they are doing, learn what works and identify where improvements can be made to help more people. Shared measurement takes this concept one step further, making it easier for charities to learn and improve, and building an evidence base for what works.

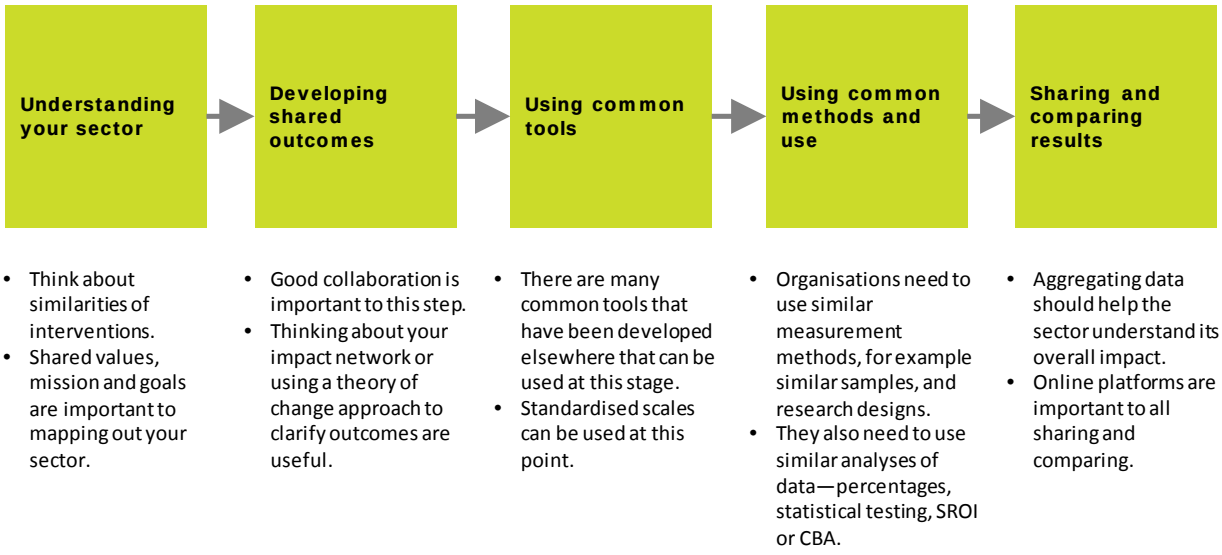
Shared measurement

Shared measurement is both the product and process of taking a shared approach to impact measurement. In terms of the product, shared measurement is any tool that can be used by more than one organisation to measure impact. In terms of the process, shared measurement involves understanding a sector's shared outcomes, and the engagement and collaboration needed to result in a shared approach.

Figure 1 is a diagram from Inspiring Impact's *Blueprint for shared measurement* showing the various elements of shared measurement. The first stage involves understanding your sector, focusing on shared goals and similarities of approach. The next stage is to develop shared outcomes using a theory of change. Common tools and methods can then be identified or developed, and, lastly, organisations can share and compare the results.

Not all shared measurement systems involve every stage—few have progressed to comparing results. Some shared measurement systems might be funder led, where a funder asks charities on one particular funding stream to measure their outcomes in the same way. Others will be more charity led, where a group of charities in the field work together on improving the evidence base.

Figure 1: Defining shared measurement



There are a number of benefits to shared measurement:

- It improves the standards of impact measurement by providing rigour and external validation.
- It allows people to compare results by introducing consistent methods of measuring outcomes. Comparability of information helps us understand what works and why, improves practices, and ultimately benefits more people.
- Shared measurement reduces the duplication of effort in developing bespoke impact measurement tools, allowing charities to focus their resources more efficiently. Having a framework to start from makes it quicker for organisations to evaluate their impact.
- Shared measurement allows charities that cannot afford to develop their own impact measurement tools or do not have the skills to analyse their data to measure and interpret their impact. Technology platforms can analyse the data much quicker than most charities would be able to.
- As more funders accept a standard method of reporting impact, it can reduce duplication in developing different reports for different funders.
- Shared measurement can also lead to closer collaboration—the process of working out what a sector's outcomes are can start a conversation about where a sector needs to prioritise resources and where closer working between organisations can help.

This report

This report builds on Inspiring Impact's previous publication *Blueprint for shared measurement* which was launched in March 2013. It looks at developments over the past year, and considers where shared measurement might go next.

Based on our experiences of developing shared measurement tools, we explain our framework for assessing if a sector is an appropriate candidate for shared measurement. The framework sets out criteria, including indicators of drivers and barriers to shared measurement. We also show the results of using this criteria by looking at three sectors—disability and employment, youth citizenship, and transitions for older people—and seeing how they compare.

What have we learnt?

As impact measurement increases in priority for charities, shared measurement is also becoming more prominent. Over the past year, there have been a number of new initiatives around shared measurement, including 4Children's Measure What Matters framework for Children's' Centres, and Substance's Sportworks for sport for development projects. NPC and Inspiring Impact have championed shared measurement and worked on the *Journey to EmploymenT (JET) framework* and its sister project the *Journey to EmploymenT in Northern Ireland.* In addition, previously existing frameworks have produced more research about what works.

Benefits

The benefits of shared measurement for charities and funders have become clearer as more systems have been developed and discussed.

Collaboration

The *Blueprint for shared measurement* discusses the importance of collaboration in developing a shared measurement tool, and also states that one of the benefits of shared measurement is seeing how an organisation's outcomes interact with others in the sector. Our work indicates that this is one of the key reasons why charities and funders are interested in shared measurement—in some cases, more than the actual measurement aspect. The initial mapping piece of work should therefore not be underplayed by organisations developing shared measurement approaches, as the process itself could lead to much more strategic coordination within the sector.

Sharing and learning

A key element of the shared measurement approach is using the information generated to compare organisations' results and learn from each other to improve services. As the *Blueprint for shared measurement* states, this is also one of the major concerns that charities have about shared measurement approaches—that their results will be compared unfavourably to others. However, as systems are developed, we see more organisations willing to overcome these concerns for the good of beneficiaries. For some organisations, being able to compare data is one of the reasons to choose shared measurement over bespoke measurement systems. The youth volunteering charity, vInspired, stated that they were interested in the JET framework because *'Lots of organisations will be using the same measures as us, so we can begin to share our data with others and find out about what types of interventions are working.'*

Over the past year, we have also seen more research released from shared measurement systems. For example, CAADA Insights service for the domestic abuse sector has published its second research piece showing the number of children involved in victims of domestic violence cases, how often they themselves show abusive tendencies, and how helping their parents can help them. As more data like this is released from shared measurement systems, it demonstrates to other sectors the benefits of this learning.

If funders are willing to accept shared systems rather than bespoke targets, they will play an important role in generating larger data sets. For example, in the research sector, the usefulness of the shared measurement system ResearchFish has been greatly helped by the number of research councils agreeing to abandon previous systems and take it up. This has opened up the potential for analysis and cross-sector advances and is an example

of funders and charities trading the cost of switching to a new system to get better quality information about what works.

Funders using shared measurement to improve their understanding of their impact

Funders are becoming more interested in shared measurement as they look to compare their grantees or aggregate their impact information. Nearly 40% of funders who answered NPC's survey on funders' impact measurement practices think that shared measurement for grantees and for funders is an important way to improve their impact measurement practices. One commented, *'For impact measurement to work there needs to be a standardised and easy to use and understand method and approach that grantees and grantors use. At the moment there is no standardisation so results cannot be compared and data cannot be benchmarked as each organisation measures their impact differently.'* This is an important indication that there is buy-in from funders and that they may be willing to pay for the development of shared measurement systems.

Caution over the application of shared measurement

Over the past year we have also received feedback on where caution is needed when considering shared measurement.

The role of funders

Although funders are an important driver, some organisations are wary of funders setting up shared measurement systems around funding programmes. While concerns about sharing information appear to have lessened over time, our experience is that charities do still worry about this. If organisations think the primary driver of a shared measurement system is to enable funders to compare organisations, then they can be very reluctant to use it. For this reason, perhaps, take up of systems that are driven primarily by funders seems to be slower than those driven by charities or independent bodies.

Another challenge is when a shared measurement system is seen as just providing targets for funders, rather than being used by charities to learn and improve. For instance, if a funder develops a measurement system, charities may sign up to it because they want the funding, without necessarily agreeing with the measures and outcomes it sets. Ultimately, if a charity feels that the system is not useful to them, it is unlikely to lead to real improvements, which negates the whole idea of impact measurement. To avoid this, systems need to be set up in collaboration with a sector—the bottom-up approach as described in the *Blueprint for shared measurement.*

While funders have an important role in recommending and encouraging use of shared measurement systems, they need to be cautious about how strongly they push them on charities. This issue worries many of the funders we have talked to—most of them are very conscious about the power they have. If a funder is keen for all grantees on a particular programme to use the same system, it should invest in training and education for grantees so that they understand how the system was put together and why particular questions are asked. This will help grantees see the system as useful for themselves, rather than just providing information for funders' targets. Funders should make it clear that organisations can customise shared measurement systems by measuring any additional outcomes that they think are important to them.

The context of shared measurement

Shared measurement systems can provide valuable information that allows us to compare interventions and organisations; but in each case the context needs to be applied. For the information to be useful, and for organisations to be happy that comparisons are fair, information about the type of people using a service, and the type of service provided will need to be brought into the analysis.

Where shared measurement is not appropriate

Some organisations have expressed concern about the universal use of shared measurement. It is definitely less appropriate under certain circumstances—for interventions that are early in development or in pilot phase, where the sector is not yet in agreement about the outcomes involved, for example. Here the focus should be on rapidly gathering evidence about what the outcomes are, to feed into a common understanding. Shared measurement systems will never be able to measure every outcome that every organisation in a sector achieves—a sector needs to reach consensus on the core outcomes before a system can be useful.

Realising the potential of shared measurement

Few of the shared measurement systems identified in our research have yet reached a level of maturity whereby the full potential of generating new research and information about what works has been realised. Sportworks, a shared measurement system designed for sport for development projects, has, however, come this far. It has used the data from 3,888 projects to produce research about the average impact of these projects. It is able to look at the risk of a young person taking part in negative behaviours, such as anti-social behaviour or substance misuse, before an intervention, and then how that risk has reduced after an intervention. On average it found there was a 52% chance that participants in the programmes would take part in crime or display anti-social behaviour before the sport for development intervention, which reduced by 16% to 37% after the intervention. The cost saving to society per participant per year is an average of £725. This research has improved what we know about sports projects, and shows the value of shared measurement systems to prove a case to funders and to see how an organisation's impact compares to the average.

To get to this stage where the results can be gathered and shared, shared measurement systems need suitable software to capture and analyse data. The data management system needs to be developed with large and small charities in mind. Our research shows that small organisations would prefer to have the software and analysis outsourced, but large organisations are likely to have their own user-tracking software that it is much more difficult for them to abandon. They would therefore prefer a system that could be adapted for use with existing software, allowing flexibility in how they collect and analyse data. Larger organisations are also more likely to do further analysis on the data, and therefore appreciate being able to download the data.

In our experience, successful shared measurement systems are developed through a combination of bottom-up initiative from the sector, and top-down encouragement and alignment from funders. The *Journey to EmploymenT framework in Northern Ireland* is an example of this. The NEETS forum in Northern Ireland is leading the development of the framework, but funders are encouraging and helping the process, without going so far as to stipulate measures or outcomes they think should be included. This funder support is driving interest in the system. This combination of bottom-up and top-down is needed

more widely to encourage the use of shared measurement and ensure we have the numbers involved to produce relevant research and analysis.

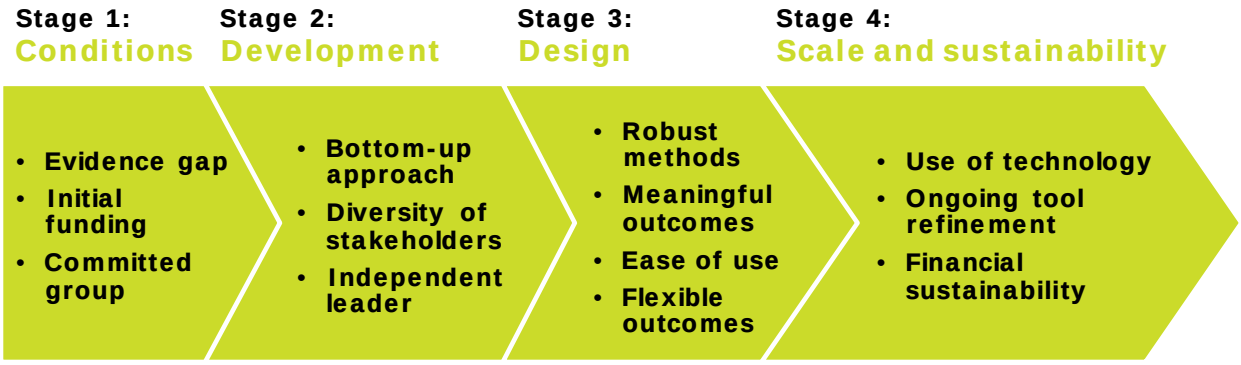
While this report focuses on how to identify new sectors for the development of shared measurement approaches, there is still more value to come from existing shared measurement systems. Some of the barriers to realising this value are technical in nature, but many derive from resistance in the sector to sharing and comparing interventions.

Assessing readiness

Shared measurement may not be appropriate for every charitable sector; some may, for example, mainly run new interventions for which there is not enough evidence about outcomes to develop a good system. However, Inspiring Impact believes that shared measurement could be used more widely to improve practice. As shared measurement systems require investment to make them work, funders and charities interested in developing shared measurement systems should carefully assess whether it will work in their sector before getting started.

The *Blueprint for shared measurement* identifies four critical elements to developing successful shared measurement approaches: conditions; development; design; and scale and sustainability. These cover what needs to be in place throughout the life of a shared measurement system if it is to be used by a sector, generate useful information, and avoid being too restrictive.

Figure 2: Conditions for shared measurement



As part of Inspiring Impact and NPC's work to identify sectors that could benefit from shared measurement, we have built on these conditions to identify criteria against which charities and funders can assess whether a sector is ready for this approach. This criteria can be used to review and grade sectors based on three core factors:

- the sector and its infrastructure;
- current evidence and measurement approaches; and
- the momentum for shared measurement.

Developed through a critical review of a database of shared measurement initiatives and research as part of the shared measurement strand of Inspiring Impact, the assessment framework suggests indicators of both drivers and barriers for shared measurement for each criteria.

Framework		***Grading***	
Factor	**Criteria**	**Drivers for shared measurement**	***Barriers for shared measurement***
Sector	• Coherency at sector or sub-sector level • Consistency in the range of interventions • Sector infrastructure for collaboration • Organisations in the sector are collaborating in others areas of work • The needs of beneficiaries and the causes of their needs are understood	Organisations in the sector are working towards similar outcomes for similar beneficiaries and recognise their commonality. There are accepted definitions for the issue being addressed; its causes are understood and specific to the sector's work. There are broad consistencies in approach between organisations, so a common measurement methodology is applicable. There is an organisation willing to host the system, drive its take up and promote the evidence coming out of it. Ideally this would be an organisation or network recognised by the sector as independent but with good knowledge of the sector. Organisations have collaborated successfully in other areas, such as joint service delivery or advocacy, or have trialled shared measurement on a small scale. Needs of beneficiaries and causes of needs are well-defined and have cross-sector agreement. Most interventions are established and stable.	Organisations do not recognise each other as peers and work towards different outcomes for their beneficiaries. The problems they address are made up of many causal factors. There is little consistency in how projects or interventions operate. Projects and interventions may either too broad or too specialised to be compared. There is little collaboration in the sector and few channels for communicating between organisations. Fierce competition for funding or fundamental disagreements within the sector stops shared working. Previous collaborations have been unsuccessful or dysfunctional. Beneficiaries' needs and the causes of their needs are poorly understood or not well documented. Most interventions are new and liable to change often, so methods for measuring their impact are poorly developed.

Factor	Criteria	Drivers for shared measurement	*Barriers for shared measurement*
Evidence	• Current evidence of effectiveness in the sector • Existing approaches to impact measurement in the sector • Pressure to prove effectiveness	Evidence of 'what works' is partially developed but is not widely known or tested. There are strong links from charities to academic interest in the field. Organisations in the sector have developed a range of approaches to impact measurement but there is no single pre-eminent approach. Funders have an appetite for impact measurement, require evidence of effectiveness from grantees but want to compare organisations and interventions.	There is a dominant or rigid requirement to report impact in a certain way, unlikely to be reviewed in the near future—for example, a government funding stream. There is limited evidence from academic knowledge of 'what works'. Measurement is very underdeveloped or inconsistent, and there are few or no robust ways to measure impact. Funders' requirements do not prioritise impact measurement.
Momentum	• Awareness of shared measurement approaches in the sector • Appropriate incentives for organisations to participate in shared measurement • Committed funder(s)	Organisations across the sector are aware of shared measurement approaches and its benefits. A change in the policy, funding or operating environment provides incentives to adopt a shared measurement approach. There is a funder (or group of funders) with the scale and influence in the sector to fund the development of a shared measurement system and disseminate it.	There is little awareness of shared measurement approaches and its benefits across the sector. Stasis in the policy, funding or operating environment disincentives change, or the policy and funding environment is in such flux that organisations are not encouraged to invest in developing a shared measurement system. Funders have limited interest in shared measurement, or funding in the sector is too fragmented to give any individual funder or organisation the scale or influence to develop or disseminate a shared measurement approach.

Case studies

The table in the previous section shows the drivers and barriers to developing impact measurement, but it is also unlikely that all of the drivers and none of the barriers will be in place at the same time. Organisations interested in developing a shared measurement system will need to assess what the barriers and drivers are in their sector, and what they can influence and change to make shared measurement more likely to be successful.

We have applied this criteria to a range of sectors to see which could be most successful in adopting a shared measurement system. The long list of sectors was narrowed down by applying NPC's knowledge of different sectors and their measurement gaps. From there, five possible sectors were identified and stakeholders within them were interviewed to obtain their perspective on if and how shared measurement might work. Sectors where there is already some work underway around shared measurement—such as criminal justice, domestic violence and financial capability—were not taken forward to the shortlist.

Below we outline three sectors where we believe shared measurement could be helpful.

Disability and Employment

The disability and employment sector meets many of the criteria we have developed to assess the readiness for shared measurement. Many of the drivers are already in place, though further work is needed to overcome certain barriers.

Sector

Within the disability and employment sector, organisations are working towards very similar outcomes for similar beneficiaries, meaning that the criteria of **coherency across the sector** and **consistency in the range of interventions** are both met. The ultimate outcome in the sector is to get disabled people into employment, and the intermediate outcomes are to make sure employers are ready to receive disabled employees and that disabled people are ready to enter the workplace. Currently, most of the work is delivered through two programmes—the Work Programme and Work Choice—which both operate on a payment by results (PbR) basis. These contracts pay organisations on completion of successful outcomes, which means the sector has some **consistency in interventions** as organisations all work toward the same outcome. In the disability and employment sector, a successful outcome is when the client has been in sustained employment for a minimum of three months. The coherency and consistency in the sector also means that **the needs of beneficiaries and the causes of their needs are understood**, well-defined and have cross-sector support. The sector supports a wide range of organisations, both in size and scope, and is therefore able to understand the needs of beneficiaries and the causes of those needs across the disability spectrum.

The disability and employment sector also meets the criteria by having a well-developed **infrastructure for collaboration**, where organisations network well and address similar issues and problems. Large organisations, such as the Shaw Trust, play a role in networking with organisations that focus on a specific disability, such as Action for Blind People, and with smaller charities that have a local or regional focus. This allows for fairly frequent collaboration, ranging from a campaign around disability issues in general to a specific response to a policy about employment and disability.

Evidence

Current evidence of effectiveness in the sector is developing all the time and a wide body of research from government, academics and charities could be built on by a shared measurement system. However, the existing approach to measurement is heavily influenced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which is interested only in whether someone has got into employment or not. Many organisations are unhappy with this and would welcome a **wider approach to measuring impact** that takes into account the intermediate achievements of a client. These are felt to be important because it can take a long time to get someone into employment. For example, a client could need to improve their IT skills first and so the completion of an IT course could be considered an intermediate outcome on their journey into employment.

As organisations participating in the Work Programme are measured and paid on completion of a successful job outcome, they are under a great deal of **pressure to prove their effectiveness** by getting clients into sustained employment. The DWP has a strong appetite for impact measurement; it requires strong evidence of effectiveness and wants to compare organisations and interventions, all of which are necessary for the adoption of shared measurement.

Momentum

Existing approaches to impact measurement and the **pressure on charities to prove their effectiveness** both drive and impede the momentum needed for adopting a shared measurement approach.

On one hand, the sector meets the criteria by creating **appropriate incentives for organisations to participate in shared measurement**, as current outcomes used for measurement are not reflective of the range of outcomes that are applicable to the sectors' beneficiaries. Exploring alternative measurement techniques is especially relevant to the disability and employment sector as the journey of a client with a disability is often less straightforward than that of someone without a disability. As many in the sector believe that the outcomes chosen by central government do not fully capture all of the work they do, this is an important driver for change. Those organisations that are not funded through the Work Programme are particularly keen that the Work Programme's outcomes do not become the standard in the sector.

On the other hand, the sector does not fully meet the criteria because, although there is **awareness of shared measurement approaches in the sector**, the current reporting climate has created a barrier to investigating other methods of impact measurement. The benefits of shared measurement have therefore not been fully explored and need to be considered further.

A large funder interested in shared measurement has so far not been identified. Those interested in trying to push this further have three possible avenues—lobbying the DWP to change its requirements; persuading prime contractors to look into measurement of intermediate outcomes; or developing a measurement system that concentrates on services that are not funded by central government.

Youth citizenship

The youth citizenship sector also meets many of the criteria we have developed, and various drivers for a shared measurement approach already exist.

Sector

The youth sector is incredibly varied, consisting as it does of many different types of organisations, both large and small. Despite this, there is some **consistency in the range of interventions** at a sub-sector level. A considerable number of organisations focus specifically on youth citizenship, which involves engaging young people in the democratic process, and even more concentrate on youth work centred on informal education for young people, which involves the development of 'soft' skills. Across different sub-sectors there are interventions that target specific age groups, for a limited time period, and others that provide activities for all young people in their area throughout the year. Some are a mixture of different programmes; for example, the National Citizen Service (NCS) programme is designed to help young people develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility through a summer residential, and by creating a social action project for their local community, which they continue for 30 weeks after finishing the residential.

The huge range of organisations, programmes and interventions that are well-defined, established and stable indicates that the sector clearly understands the **needs of their beneficiaries and the causes of their needs.** This is an important criteria to meet as it signifies that organisations in the youth sector are working towards similar outcomes for their beneficiaries, therefore bringing some **coherency at sub-sector level** to a field that is large and diverse.

Again, despite the wide variety of organisations, programmes and interventions, the sector strongly meets the criteria of having a well-developed **sector infrastructure for collaboration**; umbrella and infrastructure bodies include the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), the National Youth Agency (NYA), UK Youth and Ambition. Nationally, organisations are well connected and try to network regularly. Collaboration occurs often on research and policy issues as well as through joint programmes.

Evidence

Current evidence of effectiveness in the sector is continually developing, with strong interest from government, charities and think tanks in gathering information about what works. Shared measurement systems like Inspiring Impact's *JET framework* have helped youth organisations measure other aspects of their impact—in this case, outcomes leading to increased employability. This has increased the momentum for better measurement of citizenship outcomes.

Some in the youth citizenship sector still believe it is too difficult to measure soft outcomes, so the sector falls down slightly on the criteria of **existing approaches to impact measurement in the sector.** Still, the development of the Catalyst Framework by the Young Foundation highlights how important the social and emotional capabilities of young people are to the achievement of other outcomes in their lives. The *JET framework* also demonstrates how softer outcomes can be identified and measured effectively. It is necessary for organisations working in this sector to challenge the idea that soft skills cannot be measured.

A significant driver toward shared measurement in this sector is the increasing **pressure to prove effectiveness** as funding becomes ever scarcer. This pressure is being felt by all organisations, but with decreases in available funding, funders are concentrating on youth work that targets disadvantaged young people, and those that work with all young people are therefore often struggling the most. As funders have an increased appetite for impact measurement and include more requirements for evidence of effectiveness from grantees, measurement practices have improved for these targeted organisations but have fallen behind for those that work with all young people. Less funding has meant less resources available to develop and undertake effective measurement so they are finding it difficult to evidence their impact. Shared measurement techniques could work well for these groups that have **established and stable programmes** but are struggling to measure impact.

Momentum

There is wide **awareness of shared measurement approaches in the sector** and the benefits they bring. The Catalyst Framework is a useful tool for encouraging more robust measurement practices and many organisations now use well-being measures or outcome stars. Many organisations are familiar with the *JET Framework* which concentrates on outcomes related to employability. It may be that a citizenship framework would draw heavily on existing frameworks and tools, but work would still be needed to see how the outcomes and tools align and differ.

A number of large trusts funding in this area are interested in measurement. The Cabinet Office is also keen to drive better measurement practices and is currently taking an active role in looking at the soft and hard skills young people need and how they should be evidenced. A few funders could commit funding to develop a system.

Transitions for older people

The transitions for older people sector meets the fewest number of criteria. Some drivers are in place, but significant work is needed to overcome the barriers.

Sector

Life transitions are understood to be substantial changes taking place in a person's life that signify a distinctive departure from what had previously occurred. Transitions for older people include life changes such as retirement, becoming a grandparent and becoming a carer or needing care.

This sector is **not as established** as the other two sectors, nor does it have the same degree of coherency at sector or sub-sector level. What is meant by the term 'transitions for older people' raises a number of issues, and the sector does not yet have a strong infrastructure for collaboration. However, very recently, an appetite for transitions work is beginning to develop across the ageing sector. A few foundations and sector bodies, such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, are trying to bring organisations together to discuss issues around transitions for older people, drive collaboration and encourage coherency. This means that **the needs of beneficiaries and the causes of their needs are understood** better than they were previously. Work on developing a common understanding of outcomes would help to catalyse this. Organisations in the sector are **collaborating in other areas of work**, such as policy and campaigning, and could potentially work together on a shared measurement system too.

Evidence

Current **evidence of effectiveness in the sector is mixed**, and there are some drivers and barriers present within this criteria. Evidence of 'what works' in the transitions for older people area is still underdeveloped, but there has been more interest in the field recently; shared measurement could help here. Programmes and interventions in the ageing sector are generally set up to tackle specific issues, such as support for elderly carers, across many individual organisations, resulting in fewer opportunities to communicate and share evidence of their effectiveness.

Only a few trusts and foundations—such as Nominet Trust, the Big Lottery Fund and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation—fund transitions work for older people. Across the ageing sector more generally, funding comes from a wide variety of sources—ranging from NHS England and statutory funding, to donations and legacy giving and trusts and foundations. While some funders in the sector ask for evidence of effectiveness, others ask for very little. The consequences of this are that **existing approaches** to impact measurement in the sector are **inconsistent**, and although some shared measurement practices have been adopted, like the older peoples outcomes star, it is not widely used. This means that switching costs for a shared measurement system would be low, and now would be a good time to develop a robust system focused on transitions.

As funding is diminishing across the ageing sector, the **pressure to prove effectiveness** is felt by many organisations, so the sector meets this criteria well. There is a drive towards clearer, more consistent measuring and reporting practices, and funders are playing an important role in encouraging good measurement practice through an increased appetite for evidence of effectiveness and ways of comparing organisations and interventions. One large funder in the area, the Big Lottery Fund (BIG), has set up a Centre for Ageing Better to look at what works in this sector. BIG has already put effort

into a common evaluation system for its Silver Dreams fund, which could become part of a wider shared measurement system.

Momentum

Appropriate incentives for organisations to participate in shared measurement will begin to emerge as **committed funders** in the field drive forward better impact measurement practices. However, as funding in the ageing sector generally comes from a wide variety of sources, not all funders are equally committed in this way. This means that **impact-driven funders** can work with the sector to set a rigorous standard for measurement.

Awareness of shared measurement approaches in the sector is currently **quite mixed.** Organisations in the sector can take the initiative by increasing their understanding of the approaches to and benefits of shared measurement. They can start to gather the evidence of their impact now, and come together more to adopt rigorous shared measurement approaches.

Next steps

This report has identified two important steps for the future of shared measurement systems. Firstly, the need to identify and assess sectors for their readiness for shared measurement before starting to develop systems. Secondly, to identify the barriers for sectors that will need to be tackled in order for new shared measurement systems to be developed. Charities, funders, researchers and evaluators all have a role to play in ensuring the potential of shared measurement is realised.

Charities: build momentum and consensus with peers

The cases studies in the previous section are all promising sectors for the development of shared measurement. They also highlight an important issue: each face non-trivial barriers to developing a shared measurement framework for the sector.

For charities in these sectors—and those outside who want to realise the benefits of a shared measurement system—it is important to clearly articulate the case for shared measurement so that others can be inspired to collaborate. Membership and infrastructure organisations could take the lead in exploring the sector's readiness for shared measurement, using our assessment framework as a guide.

Funders: Identify potential and fund development

The development of successful shared measurement approaches requires time and resources. Funders are important not only in sign-posting their grantees to appropriate measurement approaches, but also in providing the resources to develop shared measurement approaches. We recommend charities take the lead in identifying funders who will benefit from greater insight into what works.

Funders with a strategic interest in a specific sector should consider if they are willing to support the development of shared measurement approaches for their grantees. NPC's recent report, *Funding impact*, developed a typology for funding approaches and recommends those with *targeted* and *single-goal oriented* funding programmes invest in shared measurement programmes. This is both to enable funders to gain a more sophisticated understanding of their impact by aggregating data across organisations, but also to help embed a learning culture about what works and why.

Evaluators and researchers: Look to the future

Evaluators and researchers—not only within charities but academics and independent researchers too—could prioritise shared measurement systems in the commissioning and design of evaluations.

Building a critical mass of shared measurement systems will establish the future of evaluation practice. Only once organisations adopt shared metrics and common measurement approaches will we be able to develop the evidence base of what truly works.

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