

Developing your Story of Change

This worksheet is designed to help you start developing a **Story of Change** for your project, service or idea.

A Story of Change is a practical way of explaining how your work aims to make a difference. It helps you connect:

The need you are responding to → The people you support → What you do → How people engage → What changes → How you know and learn

The worksheet is split into four parts, and you can use the links below to move straight to the section you want to work on.

[Part 1: A person's journey through your project](#)

[Part 2: Your project-level Story of Change](#)

[Part 3: Pulling your Story of Change together](#)

[Part 4: Sense-checking your Story of Change](#)

You do not need to complete every section during the workshop – use the parts that are most useful now and return to the rest afterwards.



Part 1: A person's journey through your project

Before developing your project-level Story of Change, it can help to think about one person's journey.

This can be a fictional person based on the kinds of people your project supports. You do not need to use a real person's story.

1. Who are you thinking about?

Briefly describe the person your project aims to support.

For example, you might think about their age, situation, local area, strengths, needs, risks, barriers or hopes.

Your notes:

2. What might be going on for them before they engage with your project?

Think about what life might look like for them before they access your support.

For example:

- What challenges, pressures or risks might they be facing?
- What support might they already have?
- What might they be missing?
- What might they feel unsure, worried or frustrated about?
- What strengths or assets might they already have?

Your notes:

3. What helps them take part?

Think about what makes engagement possible.

For example:

- How do they hear about the project?
- Why might they decide to attend or engage?
- What helps them feel safe, welcome or respected?
- What barriers might need to be removed?
- Who do they need to trust?

Your notes:

4. What do they experience through your project?

Think about what actually happens when they take part.

For example:

- What activities or support do they receive?
- What relationships do they build?
- What conversations happen?
- What opportunities do they access?
- What does the project feel like for them?

Your notes:

5. What might start to change for them?

Think about the early changes that may happen before any bigger long-term outcomes.

For example:

- Do they feel more confident?
- Do they feel listened to or supported?
- Do they build trust with staff or peers?
- Do they know where to go for help?
- Do they spend more time in positive or safer environments?
- Do they begin to make different choices?

Your notes:

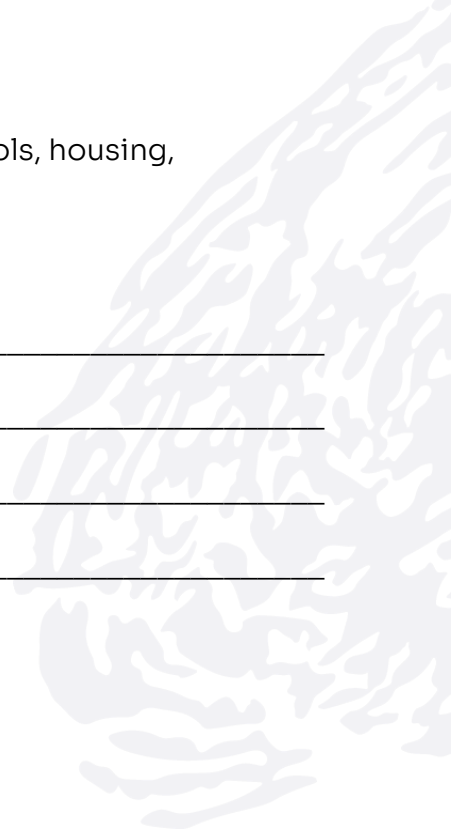
6. What might still be difficult?

A strong Story of Change should be realistic. Not everything will change quickly, and some things may be outside your project's control.

For example:

- What barriers might remain?
- What risks might continue?
- What might take longer to change?
- What might depend on other services, family, peers, schools, housing, employment or wider systems?

Your notes:



Part 2: Your project-level Story of Change

Now zoom out from one person's journey to your project as a whole.

Choose one project, service or project idea. If you are applying to the Violence Reduction Fund, you may want to use that project idea.

1. Need

What issue, risk, challenge or opportunity is your project responding to?

Think about:

- What is happening locally?
- Who is affected?
- Why is this important now?
- What do you know from your community, staff, partners or lived experience?
- What risks, needs or gaps is your project trying to respond to?

Examples might include:

- Safety or violence-related risks
- Lack of trusted support
- Social isolation
- Poor mental health or wellbeing
- Lack of positive activities or safe spaces
- Conflict in families, peer groups or communities
- Barriers to education, employment or support
- Low trust in services

Useful sentence starter

Our project is needed because...

Your notes:

2. People

Who is your project trying to support?

Think about:

- Who will you work with?
- What age group, community or local area are you focusing on?
- What barriers or risks might people face?
- What strengths, relationships or assets might they already have?
- Why is your organisation well placed to reach or support them?

Useful sentence starter

We will work with...

Your notes:

3. Activities

What will your project actually do?

Think about:

- What activities, support or opportunities will you deliver?
- How often will they happen?
- Where will they happen?
- Who will deliver them?
- Will you work with any partners?
- What will participants actually receive or take part in?

Examples might include:

- Youth work
- Mentoring
- Sports, arts or creative activities
- Outreach
- Safe spaces
- Family support
- Conflict resolution
- Training or skills development
- Referral or service navigation
- Community events



Useful sentence starter

We will deliver...

Your notes:

4. Engagement

How do people take part, and what should it feel like for them?

This is often the missing link between activities and outcomes.

Think about:

- Why would people take part?
- What would help them feel safe, respected or listened to?
- What helps build trust?
- What would make them come back?
- What relationships or experiences matter?
- What should participation feel like?

Examples might include:

- Young people feel listened to
- Participants feel respected and not judged
- Families feel supported
- People attend regularly
- People begin to talk about needs, risks or hopes
- People build trust with staff or peers

Useful sentence starter

Through taking part, people will experience...

Your notes:

5. Change

What might change because of the project?

Think about short-term, medium-term and longer-term changes.

You do not need to promise everything. Focus on changes that are **realistic** for your project to influence or contribute to.

Useful sentence starter

As a result, we hope...

A) Short-term changes

What might change first?

Examples:

- Increased trust
- Improved confidence
- Feeling listened to
- Better awareness of support
- Stronger relationships
- Increased attendance or engagement
- Improved motivation or hope

Your notes:

B) Medium-term changes

What might change after people have engaged for longer?

Examples:

- Safer choices
- Better access to support
- Reduced isolation
- Improved wellbeing

- Increased engagement in positive activities
- Improved relationships
- Better coping strategies
- More positive plans for the future

Your notes:

C) Longer-term changes

What bigger outcomes might your project contribute to over time?

Examples:

- Reduced risk of involvement in violence
- Improved safety
- Stronger protective factors
- More positive pathways
- Stronger community resilience
- Improved trust between communities and services
- Reduced escalation of risks or needs

Your notes:

6. Evidence and learning

How might you know whether change is happening?

This does not need to be complicated. Think about information that is **realistic** for your organisation to collect and useful for you to learn from.

You might use:

- Attendance and engagement information
- Short feedback questions
- Conversations with participants
- Staff observations
- Case studies
- Partner feedback
- Referral or signposting outcomes
- Reflection logs

Think about:

- What information could you collect simply?
- What feedback could participants give?
- What might staff observe?
- What could partners tell you?
- How will you use what you learn?
- How will you avoid collecting information that no one uses?

Useful sentence starter

We will learn whether this is happening by...

Your notes:



Part 4: Sense-checking your Story of Change

Before using your Story of Change – for example, in a funding application, report or planning conversation – ask:

- Have we clearly explained the need?
- Have we described who the project is for?
- Have we shown what we will do?
- Have we explained how people will engage?
- Have we shown the steps between activities and outcomes?
- Have we described realistic changes?
- Have we avoided overclaiming?
- Have we included simple ways to monitor and learn?
- Is the wording clear enough for someone outside our organisation to understand?

Final reminder

A Story of Change does not need to be perfect.

It should help you explain:

Why your work is needed, what you do, how people engage, what change you hope to support, and how you will learn along the way.

