

# Youth Endowment Fund

Measures Database for Offending  
and Related Outcomes



# Measures Database for Offending and Related Outcomes

## What's the purpose of the Measures Database?

The Measures Database for Offending and Related Outcomes is a compendium of measures (called “outcome measures”) supplementing the [YEF Outcomes Framework](#), which outlines the top outcomes that are important to the YEF’s mission of preventing children and young people from becoming involved in violence. The measures are among the most robust and user-friendly measures of offending and related outcomes that can be used in high quality evaluations.

**Outcome measures** are often questionnaires but can also be observational tools and interviews.

## How was the database created?

A narrative review was conducted on select primary outcomes to find high quality outcome measures. This included searching systematic reviews, the [YEF Evidence and Gap Map](#), and research databases (i.e., PsycINFO, MEDLINE, and EMBASE). Outcome measures were screened on the following criteria: cost and training involved, ease of completion, length of completion, within the age range of 6 and 18 years; and whether it has been validated or used in at least 5 studies. We extracted psychometric properties for each of the 42 included measures and evaluated them using a modified checklist of the [COSMIN criteria](#) (“COnsensus-based Standards for the selection of health Measurement INstruments”). This methodology of assessing measures was created by a team of researchers with expertise in the development and evaluation of outcome measures.

Detailed information on the methodology used can be found in [this publication](#).

## What's in the database?

This database provides measures for the following primary outcomes and sub-outcomes listed in the Outcomes Framework: breaking the law or 'offending behaviour'; bullying; behavioural difficulties; aggression (part of behavioural difficulties); criminal peers; drug and alcohol use; helping others (also known as prosocial behaviour); meaningful relationships; school connectedness (part of school engagement); sexual violence (part of breaking the law) and victim of crime.

For each included measure, the measures database specifies which of the primary outcomes it measures and information on items, scoring, administration, where to access, and psychometric properties. Psychometric properties are rated according to a modified version of the COSMIN criteria for good measurement properties so that a "+" rating signifies it has satisfied the criteria and a "-" rating means it has not (see Appendix). The statistics for these properties were taken from systematic reviews, recent validations, the measure developers, or large-scale studies.

We hope this measures database will be helpful for evaluators working with young people to track outcomes and continue building up the evidence base for what works in prevention and intervention. Practically, YEF will use the measures database to guide evaluators' choice of measures when designing evaluation, ensuring evaluations measuring the same outcomes are using the same measurement tools wherever possible. It is also important to recognise its limitations, such as the overrepresentation of quantitative measures (i.e., questionnaires). We appreciate a young person's journey cannot be completely reduced to a set of outcomes, and there is much knowledge to be gained through case studies and other qualitative methods of enquiry. Secondly, several measures were drawn from other fields of study, such as criminology, where psychometric properties either do not apply or are measured differently. By using the COSMIN criteria to rate these measures, it may make them appear to be less valid. Relatedly, we recognise the COSMIN's cut-offs for rating measures are higher than others, so that few measures may actually reach a "+" rating. Finally, we have included some promising measures that are in early stages of development for completeness, though more research is needed to fully understand their psychometric properties.

While from a research perspective it is important to have a primary outcome, this should not take away from having a holistic perspective when working with the young person. In line with this, there are a range of important secondary and contextual outcomes that evaluators should strive to include wherever possible, including the young person's wellbeing, assessment of needs, experiences of racism, and structural inequality. Learn more about the role of contextual outcomes in the [YEF Outcomes Framework](#).

## How do I use the database?

The Outcomes Framework is meant to be a flexible starting point for those looking to structure an evaluation; as such, there is no 'right' combination of outcomes to choose. When you're working on your logic model and deciding on your primary and secondary outcomes, check the database for the constructs you are interested in. Review the measures and the different information in a team, and if possible, with experts by experience to decide on the most appropriate measures for your constructs.

We highlight below some common considerations for all evaluators to keep in mind:

1

Have a holistic approach that puts young people first, prioritises their wellbeing, and increases their access to opportunities.

2

Understand the young person's context/history when choosing secondary outcomes, as these will drive change in the primary outcome.

3

Collaboratively create goals that are meaningful and achievable for the young person.

4

Choose measurement tools that are appropriate to the young person's age, development, and abilities.

5

Understand these outcomes alongside a young person's needs through assessments of physical and mental health, special education, neurodiversity, and other specialist assessments (e.g., Child in Need plan).

6

Recognise meaningful changes in a young person's outcomes that may not always be captured by a survey (e.g., changes in understanding, growth, or behaviours). Things not getting worse is sometimes a good outcome.

7

Work within the system of the young person and their family to ensure wraparound support.



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