



Presbyterian Support
Northern



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION 2015

How we know we are making a difference





The value of research and evaluation

Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) has been gathering robust data for the past six years in order to evaluate the quality of our services. As an organisation, we are committed to using this information to improve our service delivery and achieve measurable outcomes for clients. To be accountable, it is essential that we demonstrate that our services are responsive and effective in meeting the diverse needs of individuals, families/whānau and communities, and that we report these outcomes to our stakeholders, particularly donors and funders.

Investing in ongoing research and evaluation allows PSN to develop and deliver services in response to people's changing needs. By regularly seeking the opinions and experiences of those with whom we work, we can ensure that our services are of the highest quality, meet clients' needs and help bring about positive change.

This report highlights the effectiveness of new and existing services, using a Results Based Accountability (RBA) methodology. It also reports on research conducted to identify other needs, as part of our ongoing commitment to improving services.



Family Works Northern casework

Family Works Northern builds strong families by providing social work and counselling to individuals and families/whānau. Children, young people and adults receive support, advice and guidance that enables them to develop the skills and strategies they need to deal with challenging life-issues. Our aim is that children and their families will stay safe, learn and thrive. From July 2014 to June 2015 Family Works Northern provided social work and counselling support to 3798 clients.¹

In 2015, Family Works Northern took part in a nationwide Family Works pilot project to develop a common RBA framework for measuring service and client outcomes. RBA is used to assess how well the service is performing and meeting the needs of clients. RBA also helps improve service quality and delivery so that Family Works continues to achieve positive outcomes for clients.

The 2015 pilot project surveyed four groups of clients: adults; youth; children aged 6-12 years; and parents and caregivers of children aged 0-5years.

Feedback from a total of 96 clients revealed what they thought of the service, and how well they felt they were achieving their goals. The survey also asked clients how they thought Family Works' services could be improved to better meet their needs.

Clients felt the service was professional and supportive, and offered a flexible, tailored approach. Clients also reported they felt confident, empowered, safer and more optimistic about the future, and had developed effective strategies and skills to cope with challenges in their lives.

Overall client outcomes

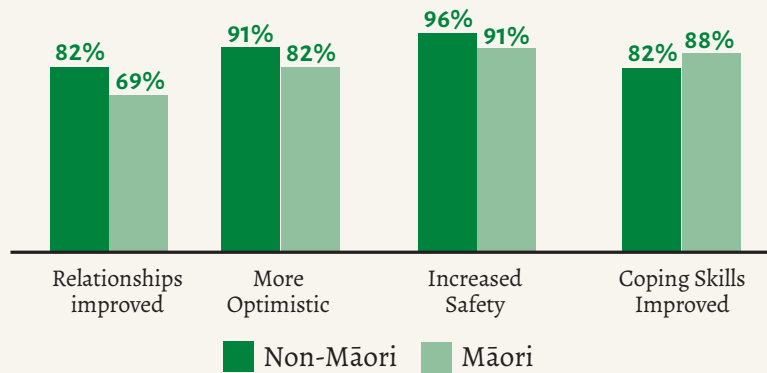
Coping improved	83 clients (86%)
Wellbeing improved	85 clients (88%)
Safety improved	90 clients (94%)
Relationships improved	75 clients (78%)
Living skills improved	88 clients (92%)

Client outcomes for youth aged 13-18 years and children aged 6-12 years

Confidence and self-esteem have improved	29 clients (83%)
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¹ Total number of existing and new clients who received social work and counselling case work support in the year to June 2015.

Client outcomes



29 CLIENTS (88%) WHO IDENTIFY AS MĀORI SAY THEIR COPING SKILLS HAVE IMPROVED.

Client surveys monitor three indicators of service performance

1. Service engagement with clients
2. Client needs are met
3. Service is strengths-based.

These indicators show how easy the service is for clients to access; how well they feel they are understood, supported, and respected; and how well they are encouraged to recognise their strengths and work towards their goals. Results also indicate how clients feel about the usefulness of the information and advice they receive.

56 ADULT AND YOUTH CLIENTS (92%) SAY THEIR WORKER SUPPORTS THEM TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS, AND HELPS THEM RECOGNISE WHAT THEY DO WELL.

59 ADULT AND YOUTH CLIENTS (96%) FEEL RESPECTED, AND THAT THEIR WORKER COMMUNICATES WITH THEM IN WAYS THEY UNDERSTAND.

These results support Family Works staff members' commitment to Presbyterian Support Northern's values in developing positive relationships, and delivering a service that is safe, respectful, flexible and responsive to clients' needs.

What Family Works clients tell us

"Family workers are so good. They help my family and they can hear and feel my pain."

"I feel like I'm not alone and that there are people out there who genuinely care."

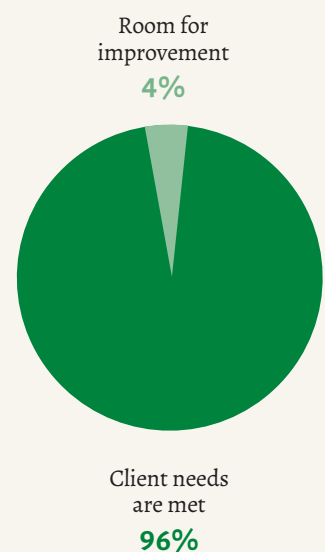
"I think it is a wonderful service and I feel so fortunate to be able to access the professional help at the moment to help me through a very trying family time."

"I have made terrific progress and I am doing a lot better in myself as a person and a parent."

"I have become more independent and am looking at life more positively, therefore I am happier."

"I can control my actions and there is a lot less family violence."

Client needs met



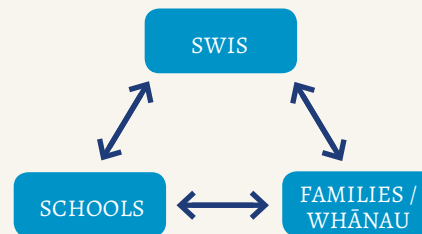
Social Workers in Schools (SWiS)

Family Works Northern provides social workers in schools (SWiS) through eleven regional sites throughout the upper North Island. The SWiS partner with schools and families/whānau to enhance children’s wellbeing and facilitate their engagement in learning.

In 2015 the service received feedback from more than 640 respondents, a high number which shows the results are robust.

The SWiS service was delivered

- to 1807 children
- by 65 social workers
- in 118 schools
- from 11 regional sites.



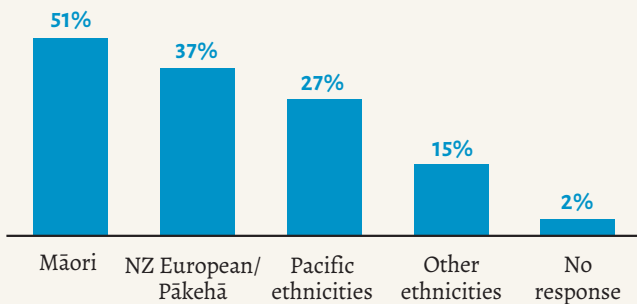
To evaluate the SWiS service, feedback is collected from children, their parents or caregivers, and staff in the schools where there is a social worker. School staff were invited to complete an online survey; of those approached, 160 staff members responded.

Stakeholder group	Number surveyed	Number of responses	Response rate
Children	602	259	43%
Parents/caregivers	570	229	40%

Results show that the SWiS service continues to provide significant support for the wellbeing of children/tamariki and their families/whānau. Parents and caregivers value the service highly, and report that their children’s behaviour improves, they are more confident, and enjoy and attend school more regularly. School staff also value the service highly, saying that it provides effective support through positive relationships with children, families/whānau and the school community. The service also supports individual staff members by allowing them to focus on their core responsibilities.



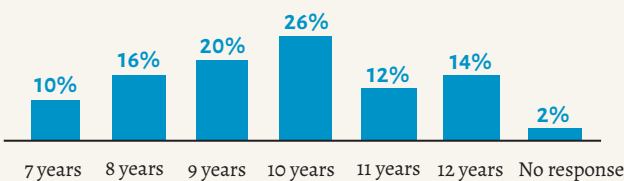
Children's ethnicities



Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 as children may identify with more than one ethnicity.

Half the children who responded to the survey identify as Māori; about one third identify as NZ European/Pākehā, and one quarter with a Pacific ethnicity.

Children's ages



Children who responded to the survey represent all age groups supported by SWiS. The largest proportion (26%) were aged 10 years.

Children's perspectives

Children comment that the service helps them make and maintain friendships, increase their self-confidence, and manage their negative emotions. Benefits include:

"Making more friends."

"Getting friends to work along with me."

"Focusing on school."

"Being more confident around others I don't know."

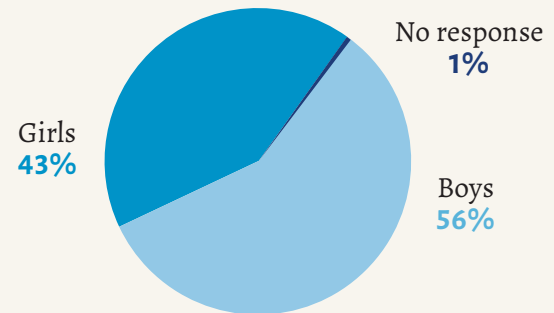
"Enjoying school."

"Anger management."

Parent/caregiver perspectives

Parents and caregivers feel well supported by the SWiS service and value its high quality and professional approach. SWiS workers build effective relationships with families and communicate with them in clear, non-judgmental and culturally responsive ways. Parents and caregivers also greatly appreciate the service because it is easily accessible in the school environment and they can discuss their concerns openly.

Children's gender



Of the children who responded to the survey, 146 (56%) are boys and 110 (43%) are girls. Three (1%) children did not indicate their gender in their responses.

Child RBA factor scores

As a result of spending time with their SWiS worker, most children feel happier and safer, enjoy school more and are able to make friends. They develop strategies to cope better with problems and obtain help if needed.

Wellbeing improved	223 children (86%)
More actively engaged	207 children (80%)
More empowered	202 children (78%)

Parent/caregiver perspectives

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- 222 (97%) trust their social worker to look after their child and believe that their social worker respects their child's culture
- 222 (97%) are satisfied with the service
- 206 (90%) believe their family's wellbeing has improved

“The service helped my children to cope with a very tough year in a positive and healthy manner.”

Parents and caregivers observe positive changes in their children

“The service helped my children to cope with a very tough year in a positive and healthy manner.”

“I have seen positive developments in my child's behaviour and attitude.”

“He isn't coming home complaining about fighting and disruption and he is talking more about learning.”

Parents and caregivers appreciate talking to SWiS about their concerns

“It is a wonderful pleasure having someone to talk to and help me and my children.”

“My child's social worker was very resourceful, and gave me suggestions and another perspective on the situation.”



School staff perspectives

115 school staff of the 160 school staff surveyed, 115 (72%) believe that the service improves teaching in their schools. School staff expressed high levels of praise for the SWiS service. They say that the SWiS presence makes a valuable contribution to the school by providing an integrated approach to supporting children, whose capacity to learn and engage with school is enhanced.

152 (95%)	believe that social workers are trustworthy and respect people's culture
130 (81%)	say their social worker engages with the community
141 (88%)	are satisfied with the service
125 (78%)	say their school's needs are being met

School staff comments on the SWiS service

School staff members say that SWiS form positive relationships with children, families/whānau and the school community. Having SWiS in their school allows staff to focus on their core roles and provides them with the comfort of knowing that children are able to access effective professional support.

"It fills a need for the numerous children and families within this area."

"It is an amazing service which allows the school to help in ways that we would not be able to without a SWiS."

"It is a valuable contribution to the school community to be able to offer our SWiS as part of the support package."

"We are fortunate to have the SWiS service and it is vital to our school operations."

"Our SWiS is an integral part of our school."

"Our SWiS colleague not only supports our children and their families, the classroom teacher also gets help and support."



Family Works Northern – Royal New Zealand Plunket Society

Family Works New Zealand collaborates with Plunket to provide an innovative early intervention service to residents of two ethnically diverse areas of Auckland with high levels of socio-economic deprivation. This service combines the expertise of Plunket nurses and qualified social workers (known as Plunket Family Workers) in an integrated team. Families with identified social needs are referred by their Plunket nurse to a Plunket Family Worker from Family Works Northern.

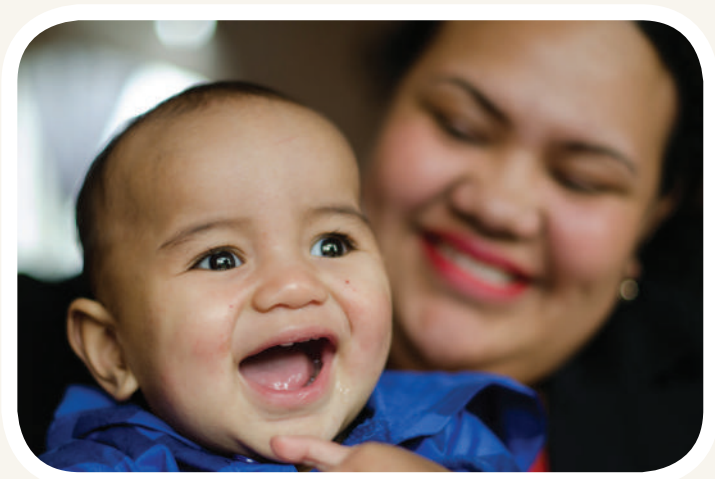
During 2015, 227 new clients were assigned a Plunket Family Worker following the identification of unmet social needs. Such families, who may not have accessed social services otherwise, were open to receiving support from a social worker. The family workers also supplied information which enabled clients to access other government and community providers to address additional needs.

The survey sought respondents' views on the quality of the service they receive and how their needs are being met, as well as outcomes such as improved parenting and better problem solving skills.

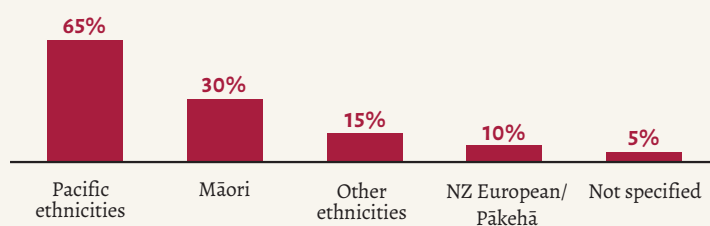
The survey achieved a 54% (40 families) response rate out of 74 families across two sites. As the clients targeted by this service are often difficult to access or reluctant to engage, the high number of clients responding to the service is very positive.

Who are our respondents?

Most of the people (65%) who access the Plunket Family Works service are of Pacific ethnicity, and almost one third (30%) are Māori. Most of those surveyed (92%) are female, 16 (40%) are in the 25-30 age group, while 10 (25%) have two children in their household. The average household size is five people.



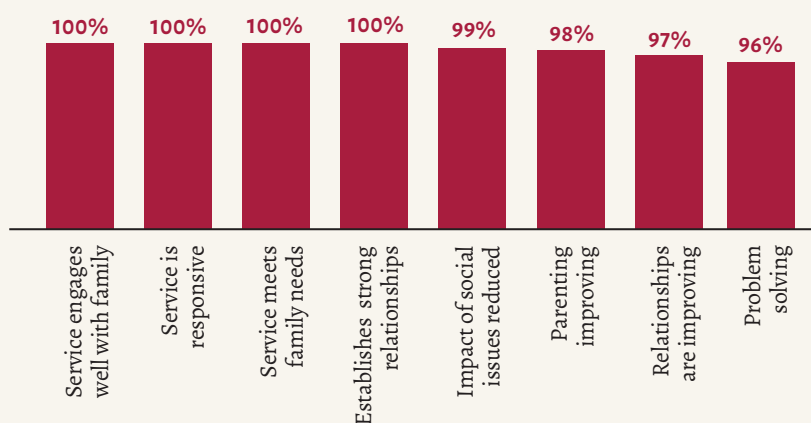
Ethnicity of respondents



Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 as clients may identify with more than one ethnicity.

- 31 respondents (78%) are in contact with their Plunket Family Worker at least once a fortnight
- 39 respondents (98%) feel their parenting, relationships and problem-solving skills have improved their lives and the service addresses their social needs
- 40 respondents (100%) say the service is well-delivered.

How well did we do?



Service outcomes

The survey shows that parents of young children who may not have previously engaged with a social service provider are happy to engage with their Plunket Family Worker and appreciate the high level of support and advice they receive.

All 40 respondents (100%) feel their Plunket Family Worker is trustworthy, communicates with them in ways that they can understand, is available when needed, provides useful information and advice, helps their family situation and respects them, their family and their culture.

Families' experience of the service

"Instant support."

"They were there when we needed help desperately."

"I can talk to someone if I need to instead of letting it build up inside."

"She's always there to help when I need her and she gives me helpful advice."

"I used the Plunket Family Worker's advice and it worked for me and my family."

"Everything they do is making me happy, not only for me but my family."

"Everything they do is making me happy, not only for me but my family."

Outcomes achieved

- 99% respondents feel they are managing their circumstances better, know how to access help, and are more hopeful about the future
- 98% respondents feel their parenting skills have improved and their relationships with their children are stronger
- 97% respondents feel that they are communicating better with other people, their relationships are improving, and they are happier and enjoying life more
- 96% respondents say they are more able to cope with difficulties as they arise, and feel more confident asking for help

Families' lives changed

"I am managing my family very well and coping with my children."

"My family is not hungry or suffering any more."

"The biggest change in my life is that my family has changed from bad to good."

"I have learned to open up to others."

"I started to make my own decisions and became stronger."

"My oldest son is now in kindy, which has been a huge improvement not only for his social skills but also his attitude; he is not as bored, a lot more stimulated."



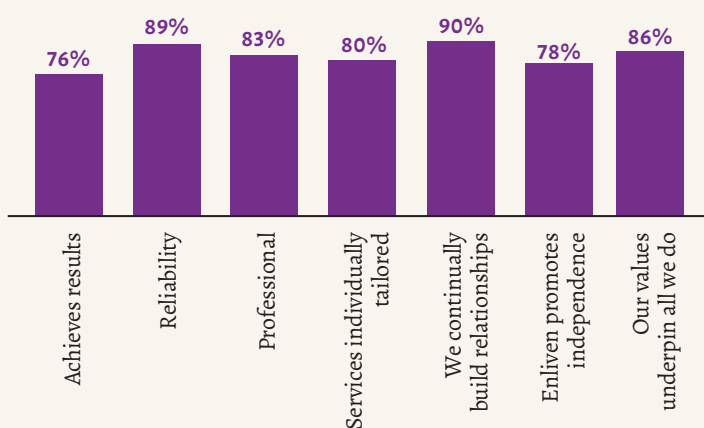
Enliven: Restorative home support for older people

Enliven maximises the independence of older people by providing practical and emotional support that enables them to remain in their own homes and engage in their community.

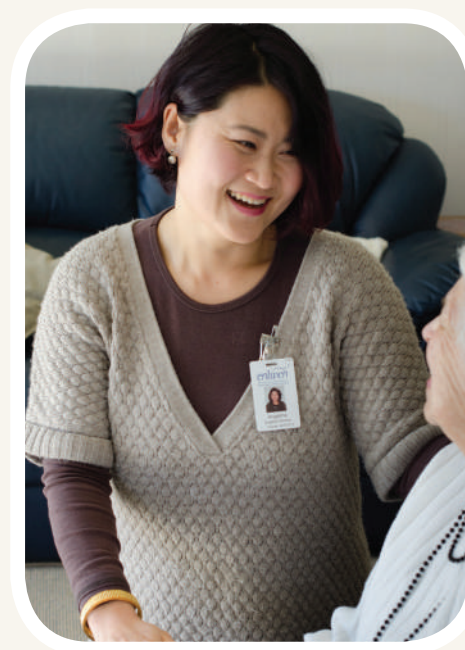
Enliven provides home support for older people across six sites (Auckland, Hamilton, Manukau, Rotorua, Taupo and Tauranga). The ninth evaluation of the service was conducted in May 2015 by surveying a sample of the 3219 clients supported by Enliven during 2014 and 2015.

The survey achieved a response rate of 42%, with 281 clients out of 672 choosing to express their views. More than three quarters of clients surveyed (78%) say that Enliven promotes their independence. Clients also appreciate and value the service, which enables them to feel more confident, safe and secure, and better able to cope. Clients particularly value continuity of support workers and consistency in visit times.

How well did we do?



The survey evaluates seven indicators of service performance, and results show consistently high achievement over all seven indicators.



Client perspectives

252 (90%)	say Enliven staff are friendly, listen to them and help them feel comfortable and safe
249 (89%)	say Enliven staff are reliable
242 (86%)	say Enliven staff respect their ideas, culture, privacy and rights, and do not judge them

Personal benefits of engaging with the service

188 (67%)	feel their wellbeing is supported
157 (56%)	feel more empowered

Enliven is a high quality and responsive service

"Enliven has been a wonderful support and regular help. It is a joy to meet friendly help arriving each week. No complaints from me. I do appreciate the service."

"To continue doing what they have been doing weekly has been an enormous help that we have been so grateful for. Many thanks to Enliven for their service."

Clients' independence is supported

"The service helps me in my desire to remain in my own home."

"The knowledge that help is available to allow me to continue living independently is what makes old age more satisfying."

Enliven makes a positive difference to clients' lives

"Takes the stress out of day by day struggles."

"I feel more secure and comfortable."

Enliven benefits caregivers and families

"I am the fulltime carer and having a little outside help gives me a break to do something for myself."

"I am very happy with the service I have from Enliven. Plus it puts my family's mind at ease to know I'm getting the help as they all live too far away."

Clients value visits from Enliven support workers

"With the company and support of caring people several times a week, life is never dull or lonely."

"I feel Enliven is sharing company."

"The service helps me in my desire to remain in my own home."

Research: Family Works Resolution Service

The Family Works Resolution Service (FWRS) enables separating or separated parents to agree on child care arrangements through mediation, without having to go to the Family Court.

Mediators and coaches/counsellors provide the service in the Auckland, Waikato, Gisborne, and Bay of Plenty regions. In 2015 Impact Research NZ was contracted by Presbyterian Support Northern to develop and trial a pilot results based accountability survey to gather feedback from clients and staff about the service.

In total, 65 clients responded during the first quarter of 2015. The survey included questions relating to the quality of service received, for example, whether clients felt safe, understood and respected; whether the mediator and coach/counsellor were available at a time that suited the client; and whether the process was impartial and fair. Other questions related to client outcomes, e.g. whether clients felt well prepared for mediation, and how confident they felt that arrangements for children would be upheld.

Clients' opinions of the FWRS service

- More than three quarters agree that the FWRS service focuses on the needs of the child.
- More than three quarters agree that the coaching/counselling service engages well with clients.
- About two thirds agree that the mediation service is safe and fair, and considers each party's needs and requirements.

Outcomes for clients

- About two thirds of clients agree that they felt well-informed about their entitlements before beginning mediation.
- More than half agree that a successful outcome was achieved through mediation.

What clients said

"My child's needs always came first throughout the session with the counsellor."

"Awesome – the mediator certainly had my child's interests at the forefront of her mind. Their needs were put first. I was happy with the outcome."

"It's been great for us and things are the best they've been in the four years since we separated."

"In the end as parents we were able to settle this amicably without the involvement of any third party."

"A good plan was made for the children."

"There is now a balance of care for the children."

"There is now a balance of care for the children."

Results Based Accountability (RBA)

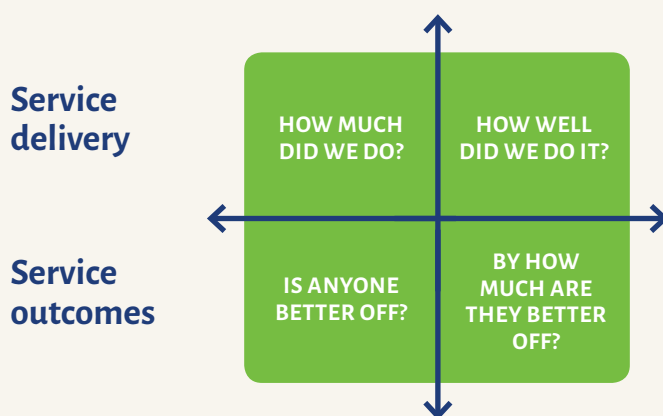
Results Based Accountability (RBA)² is the main tool Presbyterian Support Northern uses to measure outcomes for our clients, many of whom we survey on an annual basis. RBA is designed to assess the extent to which services are making a difference.

RBA evaluates how well the service is being delivered and the outcomes for clients who engage with the service. The RBA measurement framework provides a step-by-step method to turn data into action through the following processes:

- Identify desired outcomes of the service
- Determine performance indicators
- Measure the degree to which performance indicators have been met
- Identify areas for improvement
- Modify programmes or services.

Presbyterian Support Northern staff are involved in RBA evaluation by helping gain client consent for surveys, distributing questionnaires, reviewing report findings, and responding to identified areas for improvement.

Quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys are analysed and presented in site and overall service reports.



Presbyterian Support Northern has been collecting RBA data for six years, which means we can analyse trends over time. We are able to track progress specifically for different client groups who need to overcome barriers to achieve the best outcomes.



² Mark Friedman, *Trying Hard is not Good Enough: How to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities*, (Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford, 2005).



Presbyterian Support

Northern

*Presbyterian Support Northern helps create a better life for everyone.
Our social services build strong families and enable older people and those with
disabilities or injuries to maximise their independence.*