Using data to improve our services

A guide to using your data in the Data Exchange to improve client outcomes and service delivery

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Introduction

Data can be a powerful tool for planning, decision making, evaluation and advocacy. We can use the data in the Data Exchange to:

- inform service delivery decisions
- identify gaps in service delivery
- understand the effectiveness of our services
- plan and forecast for the future
- advocate for your community and their needs

This document will support you to make the most of your data and use it inform decisions about service delivery.

We have developed some examples to help you understand how your Data Exchange data can be used to:

1. Understand client needs
2. Understand and improve client outcomes
3. Understand client pathways
4. Plan and forecast future service delivery

Each example includes a series of questions you can use your data to answer. We also show you where to find the data to answer these questions.

These examples also show how your Data Exchange data is just one type of evidence that can be used to inform decision making. Your data should be combined with other types of evidence to design, implement and improve your programs and interventions. Other types of evidence include:

- research evidence
- lived experience and client voice
- professional expertise

For more information about what evidence is and how to use it in the TEI program see:
Using Evidence in the Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

Important note: The examples in Part 2 of this document are just that, examples. They merely demonstrate how data COULD be used to answer common questions and inform decisions. You need to review your own data and come to your own conclusions about what it means. For assistance email: TEI@facs.nsw.gov.au

The Data Exchange Reports

The Data Exchange has a self-service reporting function that allows organisations to access their own data in a series of online reports. The reports share valuable and useful information so we can continually ensure our services are effective and relevant to our clients. It can inform business planning and provide insights into program delivery and policy development. The data in the reports is de-identified.

These reports can be accessed by organisations at any time. The content of reports is refreshed every 24 hours, to enable near real-time access to information. This means the more regularly you enter your data, the more relevant your reports will be.

TEI service providers can access eight different Data Exchange reports.

Standard reports

All organisations who use the Data Exchange have automatic access to these reports.

- Organisation overview report provides information about the organisation's service delivery (e.g. clients, outlets, service types and patterns of service delivery). Use this report to see which services are accessed most often, or whether client groups and their needs are changing.
- Organisation data quality report highlights key data quality issues (e.g. missing client information). Use this report to improve your dataset.

Partnership Approach reports

In the TEI program, it is compulsory for service providers to participate in the Partnership Approach. The Partnership Approach gives you access to several additional reports. These reports include extended data, client and community outcomes and population-level datasets.

- NSW TEI Activity Report is for the TEI program. It will support TEI service providers to monitor and evaluate their work and understand the outcomes their activities contribute to.
- Service Footprint report provides a roadmap of clients accessing services. It shows how far clients travel to services and how many clients an organisation has supported in different regions.
- Resource Planning report helps predict trends in service delivery to assist with future planning of resources.
- Community profiles report combines population-level datasets. There are two editions of this report. The first contains 2011 census data and the second contains 2016

census data. Note: this report does not include information reported by TEI service providers.

- Client outcomes report looks at changes in individual client outcomes over time (SCORE). We can use this data to understand if clients' circumstances are improving, they're achieving their goals, or if they are satisfied with the service they received.
- Community outcomes report looks at changes in group or community outcomes over time (Community SCORE).

Additional resources

There are numerous resources you can use to better under how to use the Data Exchange and get the most out of your data:

- TEI Data Collection and Reporting Guide
- The Data Exchange Reports: Access, explore and export your data
- Using data to improve our services
- The NSW TEI Activity Report

Example 1: Understand client needs

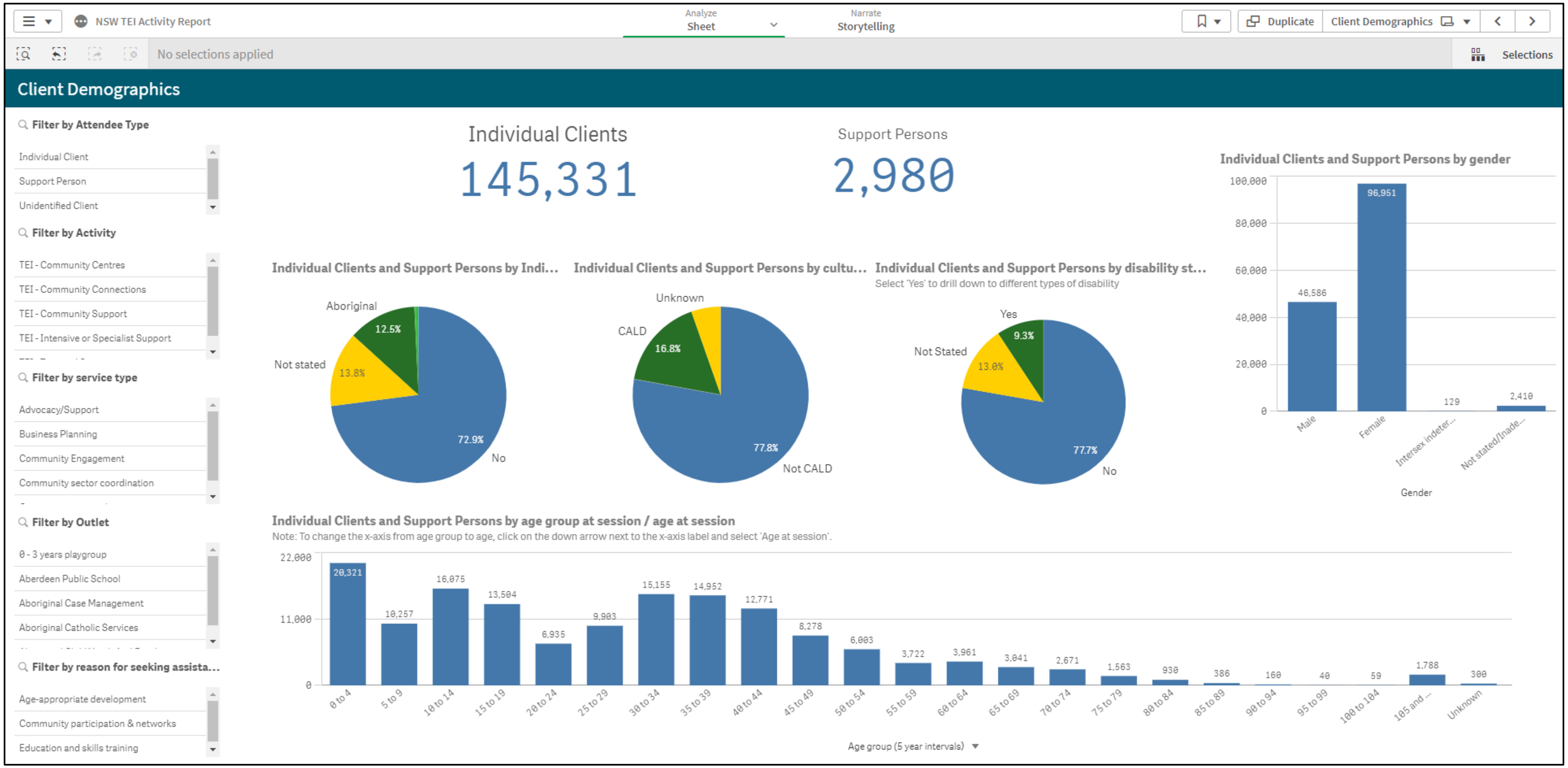
The Data Exchange can help us get a clear and up-to-date picture of who our clients are and what services they need. We can use this information to make sure clients get the right services at the right time. We can also use it to make sure we're reaching the right target groups in our communities and to see how these groups might change over time.

Below are a series of questions you can use your data to answer. You can also see where to find this data in the Data Exchange reports.

<table>
<tr><th>Questions</th><th>Data Exchange Report</th></tr>
<tr><td>What are the common characteristics of our clients?
What are the most common presenting issues clients have?
Do we have the capability and resources to meet the needs of these groups?</td><td rowspan="3">
NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Client Demographics', 'Housing and Service delivery' and 'Referrals'.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Is there a difference in client characteristics and needs between activities? Why might this be?
How might this impact our service delivery?
Are staff qualified/trained to deal with these issues? Do we have the most appropriate staff working with specific client groups?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Is there a difference in client characteristics and needs between outlets? Why might this be?
How might this impact our service delivery?
Are our services in the right locations for our clients</td></tr>
<tr><td>Is there a difference between the number of sessions client groups receive? Why might this be?
How might this impact our service delivery?</td><td> NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Client demographics – Attendance Rates'.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Have our client groups changed over time? Why might this be?
Are there new vulnerable groups in our community that we need to start working with?</td><td>Use the time period filters (e.g. financial year, reporting period) to compare your data and see if there are changes over time.</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 1 is an example of the ‘Client demographics’ sheet in the NSW TEI Activity report. On this sheet we can see key demographic information including gender, age, Indigenous status, homelessness, disability status and CALD status. We can use this information to understand the characteristics of our clients and if we need to adapt our service delivery to accommodate our clients’ needs.

Figure 1. Client demographics



Example 2: Understand and improve client outcomes

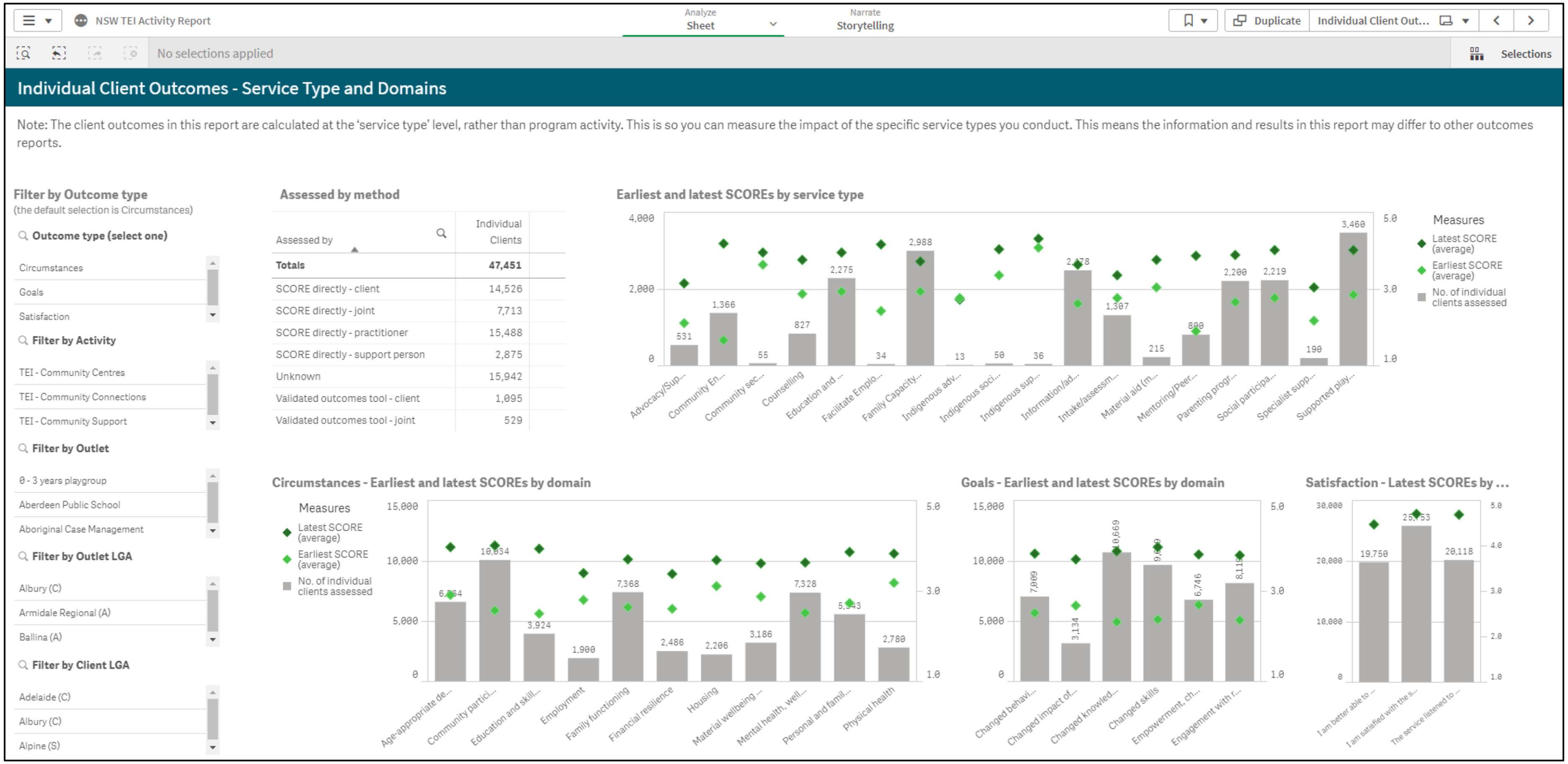
The Data Exchange can help us understand if we're making a positive impact in our clients' lives. We can see if our clients' circumstances have improved or if they've achieved their goals since receiving our services. We can use this information to improve our services and demonstrate their effectiveness.

Below are a series of questions you can use your data to answer. You can also see where to find this data in the Data Exchange reports.

<table>
<tr><th>Questions</th><th>Data Exchange Report</th></tr>
<tr><td>• What is the average shift in outcomes for our clients? Are there any neutral or negative shifts?
• What % of clients have positive, negative or neutral outcomes?
• What could have caused the negative and neutral outcomes?
• What can we do differently to improve our client's outcomes?</td><td>NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Individual client outcomes – Summary'.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Which SCORE domains have been used to assess client outcomes? Are we measuring the right outcomes? Do we need to change the questions we use?
• Are clients more likely to achieve positive outcomes in some domains than others? What does this tell us about the impact of our services?</td><td rowspan="3">NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Individual client outcomes – service type and domains'.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Is there a difference in client outcomes between activities? Why might this be?
• Could some activities be more effective than others?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Is there a difference in client outcomes between outlets? Why might this be? Could some outlets be more effective than others?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Is there a difference in client outcomes between different target groups/demographics?
• Why might this be?
• Do some groups of clients need more or different support to others?</td><td>NSW TEI Activity report – see sheets 'Individual client outcomes – demographics' & 'Earliest and Latest SCOREs by demographics'.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Is there a difference in client outcomes across different reporting periods? Why might this be?
• What changes have occurred in the community or in our service delivery that could have caused these changes?</td><td>NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Individual client outcomes – Overview'.</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 2 is an example of the 'Individual Client Outcomes – Service types and Domains' sheet in the NSW TEI Activity report. On this sheet we can see the average shift in SCOREs by service type. We can also see the different domains outcomes have been recorded in and the average earliest and latest SCORE for each domain. We can use this information to see if some activities are more effective than others, and to see the type of outcomes clients achieve.

Figure 2. Individual client outcomes – Service types and domains



Assessed by	Individual Clients
Totals	**47,451**
SCORE directly - client	14,526
SCORE directly - joint	7,713
SCORE directly - practitioner	15,488
SCORE directly - support person	2,875
Unknown	15,942
Validated outcomes tool - client	1,095
Validated outcomes tool - joint	529

Example 3: Understand client pathways

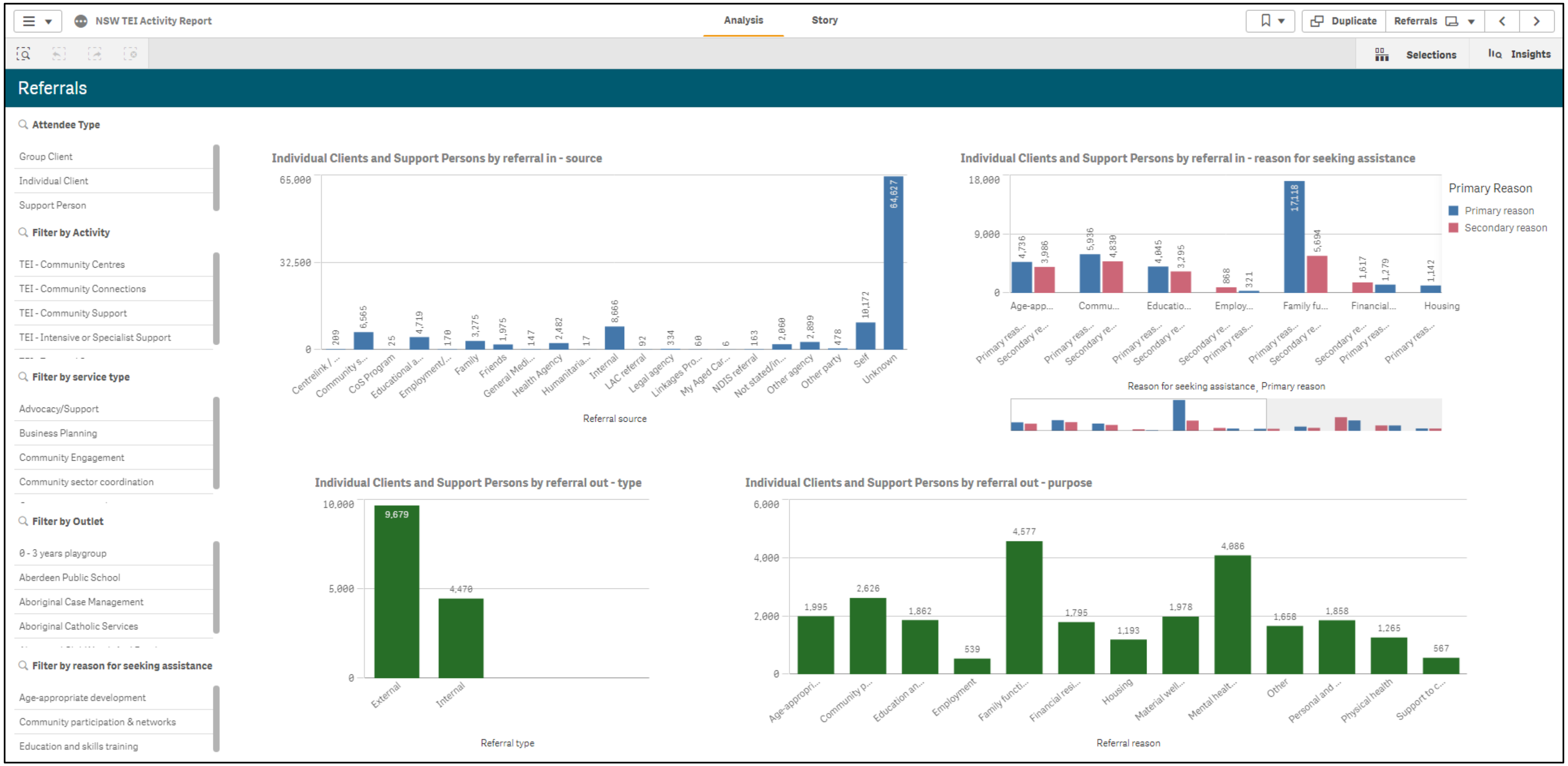
The Data Exchange can help us understand how clients move through the service system and come in contact with our services. We can get a better picture of the type of services clients are referred to and why. We can use this information to help us facilitate effective referrals and to identify issues that may require a community-level response.

Below are a series of questions you can use your data to answer. You can also see where to find this data in the Data Exchange reports.

<table>
<tr><th>Questions</th><th>Data Exchange Report</th></tr>
<tr><td>• How are clients come in contact with our organisation?
• What type of organisations are referring clients to us?
• Do we need to promote our service to other organisations or practitioners?</td><td rowspan="5">
NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet ‘Referrals.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• What are the most common presenting issues clients have?
• What activities are these clients participating in?
• Do we have the capability and resources to address these issues?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• How many internal referrals are we conducting?
• What are the most common reasons for internal referrals?
• Are there specific issues that we should be identifying earlier on?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• How many external referrals are we conducting?
• What are the most common reasons for external referrals?
• Are there specific issues that we need to work with other organisations to address?
• Do we need to link in with other organisations to better meet our client’s needs?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Are these issues changing over time? Why might this be?</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 3 is an example of the ‘Referrals’ sheet in the NSW TEI Activity report. On this sheet we can see the source for referrals in and client’s reasons for seeking assistance. We can also see referrals out, if they’re internal or external, and the reason for referral. We can use this information to better understand our clients’ needs and to make sure we’re best placed to address them.

Figure 3. Understanding client pathways



Example 4: Plan and forecast future service delivery

The Data Exchange shows changes in service delivery over time, including client numbers, attendances, and sessions. You can compare financial years, reporting periods, months and even days to identify trends and patterns. This can help you plan and forecast future service delivery (e.g. resources, staffing).

Below are a series of questions you can use your data to answer. You can also see where to find this data in the Data Exchange reports.

Questions	Data Exchange Report
• How many individual and/or unidentified group clients did we see each month? • Have client numbers changed in comparison to the previous year? Why might this be?	Resource Planning NSW report – see sheet 'Clients'. NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Overview of Client numbers'.
• How many sessions did we deliver? • Were session numbers high or low in particular months? • How could that affect staffing levels in the future?	Resource Planning NSW report – see sheet 'Sessions'.
• What's the average number of clients per session? • Do we have enough staff at each session to ensure clients get the best service possible?	NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Cases, Sessions and Attendees.
• What were the differences in levels of activity over the year? • Have client numbers changed due to new issues in the community (e.g. natural disaster)? • Have client numbers increased in line with the introduction of new services or programs?	Resource Planning NSW report – see sheets 'Clients' and 'Sessions'. NSW TEI Activity report – see sheet 'Overview of Client numbers'.
• What were the busy and quiet times, on a monthly/weekly basis? • Are sessions occurring more on certain days of the week? Could this be staff or client preference? • How can we plan for this?	Resource Planning NSW report – see sheet 'Sessions'.
• What changes can we see over the last two years? • How should this impact our planning and forecasting (short- and long-term)?	Resource Planning NSW report – see sheet 'Sessions'.

Figure 4 is an example from the Resource Planning report. It displays a screen shot of the 'Clients' sheet. On this sheet we can see how client numbers have changed throughout the financial years, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021.

You can compare client numbers to see if some months are busier than others, and you can use this information to help you plan your service delivery in the future. You can also see a breakdown of this information by day – just click on the month you want to look at and apply it as a filter.

Figure 4. Plan and forecast for future service delivery