**Quality Improvement – How To Guide**

Change and improvement is key in meeting the expectations of our service users and staff in an ever-changing world. Quality improvement **happens every day**- for example, improvements to care plan templates, responding and implementing actions in response to a complaint - all improve quality.​

The way we deliver change is paramount to embedding and sustaining it. Changes can be large or small, simple or complex and can be driven by a number of different reasons. Whatever these are, and however they happen, it is important to use some basic principles.

This guide aims to support you to make your change or service improvement

You will likely have already arrived at a reason for wanting to make the change. You will probably have already thought about:

* What changes you’d like / need to make?
* Why the changes need to happen?
* Who do you hope will benefit from the change?
* Who will be responsible for making the change or how is the change going to happen?
* When do you need to do it by?
* How will you know if it has done what you expected it to do?
* How will you engage and / or let others know about your plans?

These are just some of the questions that you would need to consider for any area that you are looking to improve or change.

It all starts with a vision, how you arrived at it and a basic outline of what you want to do – this is often referred to as the SCOPE.

**SCOPE**

There are a number of questions that you need to ask yourself and others when considering a change.

It is a good idea to structure these and write them down so you can be clear throughout your journey of change. It can also serve as a great talking or reference point when it comes to engaging and communicating with others.

There is a handy scoping document template which covers the main areas to consider and will be the foundation on which to build your plans.

Next, we would want to think about how we will make the change happen. Quite often this will take the form of a ‘Project’ and will want to follow our Trust Quality Improvement approach (Think QI) which is a framework for delivering quality change.

There are 3 key parts to this approach:



**Step 1 - Deep Dive** – The first phase is all about looking into and understanding a problem or improvement area. You will gather data or information to build a picture of the current situation and collect your baseline measures. At the end of this stage you will understand the root cause of the problem and be able to define what improvement you want to see.

**Step 2 - Design** – This phase is about generating your improvement ideas and solutions and agreeing which one/s to test first. Once agreed, you will then design and add the detail to your chosen solution/s and decide how you will measure the impact/s.

**Step 3 - Deliver** – This phase is where you get plan, test and carry out the solution/change and then measure the impact/s it has had. We can use PDSA to help us with this. This stands for Plan, Do, Study, Act.

**P**lan your change,

**D**o the change,

**S**tudy the results, and

**A**ct on the results - make tweaks, share and spread the improvement.

(**Evolve** – This isn’t actually a phase, just a reminder that we shouldn’t stop improving! There is always the opportunity to improve a little more!)

**DEEP DIVE**

So, we have scoped our problem, the next stage would be to articulate the main purpose of the work and the problem statement in a more defined way. Historically, this has been referred to by many names - project charter or project brief are the most common.

**Project Charter:**

The project charter describes and provides an overview of your proposed change / improvement project and what it will deliver. It helps ensure that all those involved have a clear understanding and direction.

The project charter should include:

* the reason for the change / improvement project (which includes any supporting data or feedback that validates the need for change),
* the goal,
* the objectives,
* what is in and out of scope,
* any interdependencies,
* key people involved, and
* your delivery timelines.

The project charter should be agreed by the project group and signed off by your Line Manager / Service Manager or Service Director if needed.

The project charter should be reviewed as you progress through your change or improvement project to ensure it is up to date. Any changes to it should be signed off by the Line / Service Manager / Service Director.

The template on the QI pages has guiding notes within it to help you complete it.

**DESIGN**

There are lots of tools and guides on the intranet if you need some help thinking creatively and generating ideas.



**Impact Assessments:**

When you have a clear understanding of the problem / area of improvement and have defined your aim you need to start thinking about the impact that any proposed changes might have on people and services. There are 3 types of impact assessment which you can use; these are listed below with links to each template.

* **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** [<https://nww.documentlibrary.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Download.ashx?DocumentId=9ff2c00c-059e-433d-82a4-7411c065992e>](https://nww.documentlibrary.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Download.ashx?DocumentId=9ff2c00c-059e-433d-82a4-7411c065992e)

An Equality Impact Assessment should consider whether a proposed improvement or change could affect some groups unfavourably, especially minority groups who may experience inequality, discrimination, social exclusion or disadvantage.

* **Quality Impact Assessment (QIA)** [<https://nww.documentlibrary.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Download.ashx?DocumentId=3395548c-8128-488a-a129-435347795d61>](https://nww.documentlibrary.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Download.ashx?DocumentId=3395548c-8128-488a-a129-435347795d61)(Appendix 2)

The Quality Impact Assessment ensures that we identify the impact that any planned improvement or change may have on the quality of care provided to our patients, and that we have the appropriate steps in place to safeguard quality.

* **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** [<https://nww.documentlibrary.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Download.ashx?DocumentId=dafc47fa-2c6b-481d-a47f-f2d9750c2782>](https://nww.documentlibrary.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/Download.ashx?DocumentId=dafc47fa-2c6b-481d-a47f-f2d9750c2782)

A Privacy Impact Assessment is a process which helps to identify the risks and potential effects of collecting, maintaining, and disseminating Personal Confidential Data (PCD) and help to ensure compliance with data protection obligations. Not all improvements/change ideas will require a PIA.

**DELIVER**

Once you have completed your project charter and impact assessments you can now start planning how you will deliver your change / improvement project.

There are 2 different tools to help you plan your change / improvement project – a project plan tracker or a project Gantt chart.

**Project Plan Tracker**

The project plan tracker will help keep track of all the tasks or actions that need to be completed throughout the change / improvement project. It identifies the different workstreams, who will be doing what and by when. It is RAG rated so it is easy to keep an eye on any slippage in timescales.

**Project Gantt Chart**

The project Gantt chart is very similar to the project plan tracker, but it also visually represents the tasks or actions, their start and finish dates and their duration on a timeline.

**Lessons Learned:**

Throughout your project it is helpful to keep a log of any lessons learned along the way. Record both positive and negative experiences, and learnings of your project as these can all be helpful for future improvements you may embark on, as well as for sharing with others. At the end of your project, it is also really helpful to get your project team members together, with any key stakeholders, to review any learning to date and add any additional learning to the log. Using a template like the one below can be helpful for capturing everyone’s contributions and remember to summarise and share your learning afterwards.

**Closure Report:**

At the end of your project, you should complete a closure report. The report will include a review of what has been achieved and delivered, and include any lessons learned. It will also include any outstanding actions and recommendations as well as a timetable for ongoing review.

This will also help with the ‘evolve’ aspect and ensure that the changes are sustainable, and you help build a culture of Continuous Improvement.

To find out more about Quality Improvement visit the Think QI section on the intranet, where you will find templates and further guidance for all tools mentioned in this guide in the Tools and Resources section <https://nww.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/knowledge-hub/think-quality-improvement>.