

Improvement Cymru Academy Toolkit Guide



Implementation

Date: January 2024

Review date: January 2026

Introduction

The term implementation can be described as making a change. This is a broad perspective of the term, that would include developing, testing, and sustaining a change. However, implementation in its narrowest term is defined as ‘embedding the successful change ideas tested during your quality improvement (QI) project, into your team’s daily operations’. This enables the improvement to become an integral part of the system. This is what we commonly refer to as making the new way of working “business as usual”. (East London NHS Foundation Trust) and this is what we will refer to in this toolkit guide. Often use the term is used interchangeably between implementing a change idea to test and implementing a successful change idea to make it an integral part of the system, therefore it is important to clarify the context of how you are using the term.

Rationale

Once you have tested an idea and you can see that it has successfully achieved the aim of your project and has been sustained, it is important to have a robust implementation plan in place to help ensure that changes remain sustainable and improvement efforts by the team are not lost. An implementation plan for quality improvement is important for several reasons:

- It provides a clear direction for you and the team to follow. Having an implementation plan will ensure stakeholder engagement so that everyone in the team understands their roles and responsibilities. This will increase buy-in and support.
- It will allow you to allocate resources such as time, budget, personnel to ensure that the quality improvement initiative is successfully implemented.
- It will provide a tracking and monitoring system to help identify any deviations from the plan against set objectives and timelines.
- It will support the identification of potential risks and challenges that may obstruct the quality improvement initiative and will assist in the development of a contingency plan.
- It will help to ensure sustainability by embedding the changes into working practises and culture.

When to implement

Once you have tested a change idea on a small scale and studied the results, the act stage of the cycle is where you will plan whether you adopt the change if it has been successful, adapt the change based on learning from the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle or abandon the change if it has not been successful. An operational definition of sustained improvement set by the East London NHS Foundation Trust states that a run chart showing a minimum of a shift plus 3 data points at the new performance level (See our [Run Charts Toolkit Guide here](#) for more information). or a control chart showing a minimum of a shift plus 4 data points at the new performance level would indicate a sustained improvement (See our [Statistical Process Control toolkit guide](#)). Whilst a signal of non-random variation is needed to show if the change has made an improvement, we would recommend extending the median of the baseline data and run the change idea over a period of time to ensure sustainability under different conditions. Once the change has been sustained under different conditions then you would need to create a plan to start embedding the change idea into current practise.

How to implement

When you are ready to implement there is a six-step approach that has been recommended and outlined in the Improvement Guide Chapter 8 (Langley et al, 1992), East London Quality Improvement foundation and LifeQI.

Step 1: Standardisation

Standardisation is a method for establishing recognised practises that act as a guideline for a process. The actual documented procedures, methods, training requirements, equipment required, and roles and responsibilities are called 'standards' and/or 'best practise' (See our [Standardisation toolkit guide here](#) for more information).

Step 2: Documentation

There needs to be appropriate documentation once standards/best practises have been decided by stakeholders. There will need to be documentation of new

processes including a system of reviewing and updating documentation when new knowledge becomes available. Documents are active and live pieces of work that should include the process as well as assigned roles and responsibilities.

Step 3: Measurement

Once you start to implement changes into practice, you will need to have a system in place to know whether the performance level has been maintained. Measurement is important for learning during implementation and maintaining momentum. The measurements that were developed for testing and implementing the change should be considered for use after implementation, but data collection could happen on a less frequent basis unless there is a reason for more frequent data collection e.g. sustainability. Using the same measurements and capturing data over time will allow the team to see whether the change is still having the desired impact. This data can also be used to understand whether the supporting processes are impacting the results e.g. have all staff had training? Has the new standard been circulated to everyone? It is important to share data with the team.

Step 4: Staff Education/Training/Support

Some form of training is usually required to enable implementation. If the change is simple and a small change to work processes, then a discussion of the change with staff could suffice. However, if the change is complex, then more formal training may be required. Staff will be motivated to learn when they see a need or a reason for the change therefore project leaders will be required to explain 'why' this change is needed.

It is essential that training is given at the right time. If training is given too early, then people will come to a halt on the learning curve as they have been unable to practise what they have been taught.

Step 5: Resource Implications

Implementing a change may require resources such as new forms, training, a piece of equipment or additional staff. This is sometimes not considered at the testing stage as testing is done on a small-scale where resources may not be an issue. You

will need to consider how the proposed change will be maintained as part of the implementation plan. This should apply to all changes as sometimes even small changes can have a big impact.

Step 6: Social Dimensions of Change

To sustain improvement efforts, you will need to have collective leadership and continually engage staff to motivate and guide them. If staff are not effectively engaged in changing behaviours and habits the change will not stick. Explaining why and how the change needs to happen is an important step in motivating staff. Staff who have been involved in the initial testing of an improvement are key to getting others onboard. You could perform a stakeholder analysis where you encompass a 'What is it in for me?' approach for each stakeholder to gain buy in and motivate staff. Organising a meeting with staff to discuss concerns around changes made is important part of implementation. You can do this through compassionate leadership to ensure staff feel heard and concerns can be addressed. See our [Human Side of Improvement Toolkit Guide here](#) for more information.

What next?

Look at what your data is telling you and talk with your team. Have you sustainably improved your process over a period and are you ready to adopt your change idea into working practise? If so, use the 6 steps for implementation to start embedding your change idea into working practise.

Helpful tips

To understand whether you are ready to implement a change idea into current practise, you can use qualitative and quantitative data such as audit/process confirmation, surveys, complaints, safety incident forms etc... You can go, look, and see (see [Gemba toolkit guide here](#) for more information) to review and ask questions about the process and engage with the team to see if you are ready to implement. You could also ask other organisations whether this change has been implemented elsewhere. It is important that you do not start with large pilots, spread the pilot untested elsewhere and expect marked improvements in outcome measures early

on without regard to the process. Do not find one person that is willing to do all the work and don't expect people to work harder as this can lead to sustainability issues.

Additional resources

<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/improvement-cymru-academy/> or email us at improvementcymruacademy@wales.nhs.uk to find out about the improvement courses we offer.

Further reading

Creighton, S. (2021). How to implement QI projects successfully. Available at: <https://blog.lifeqisystem.com/implement-qi-projects-successfully> (Accessed 07 Nov 2023)

East London NHS Foundation Trust (No Date). Ensuring we hold the gains of improvement work through effective management of implementation. Available at: <https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Implementation-Guidance.pdf> (Accessed 07 Nov 2023)

East London NHS Foundation Trust (No date). Implementation. Available at: <https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/resource/implementation/> (Accessed 07 Nov 2023)

East London NHS Foundation Trust (No date). Implementation and holding the gains. Available at: <https://youtu.be/tqDa94xWngE> (Accessed 07 Nov 2023)

East London NHS Foundation Trust (No date). Implementing your Quality Improvement (QI) project and setting up a Quality Control (QC) system: A summary guide. Available at: <https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ELFT-QC-summary-guide.pdf#:~:text=Implementation%20is%20about%20embedding%20the%20successful%20change%20ideas,the%20new%20way%20of%20working%20%E2%80%98business%20as%20usual%E2%80%99>. (Accessed 07 Nov 2023)

Langley, G.L, Moen, R.D., Nolan, K.M., Nolan, T. W., Normal, C. L., Provost, L. P. (2009). *The Improvement Guide: A practical approach to enhancing organisational performance*. 2nd edn. USA. Jossey-Bass.

NHS Scotland. (No Date). Implementation Checklist. Accessed from:

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/51822/quality-improvement-zone/qi-tools/implementation-checklist> (Accessed 20 Dec 2023)

Improvement Cymru Academy Implementation Template

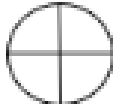
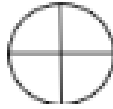
Name of project: _____ Department: _____ Date: _____ Author: _____

- You can add more action points to the table if required.

Step 1: Standardisation

- Have you standardised the new ways of working?
- List all the processes, jobs, and tasks necessary to maintain the change idea.
- Assign roles and responsibilities so everyone will know what is expected of them

Notes:

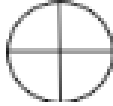
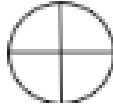
Action point	Action	Who	By When	Progress	Initial
1					
2					

Step 2: Documentation

- Are the new standard ways of working written down and saved?
- Have policies been updated?

3. What infrastructure is in place to update documents in the future when new information is available?

Notes:

Action point	Action	Who	By When	Progress	Initial
1					
2					

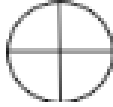
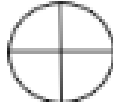
Step 3: Measurement

1. How will you know that your change idea is still maintaining a positive impact?
2. Have you recorded details of who will measure, what they will measure, when will they measure and how often will they measure?
3. Have you created an operational definition for data collection?

Notes:

Operational Definition:

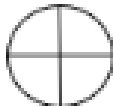
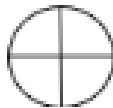
Action point	Action	Who	By When	Progress	Initial
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1					
2					

Step 4: Staff Education/Training/Support

1. How are the new ways of working as outlined in step 1 and 2 being integrated into staff education and training, inductions, and staff yearly reviews?
2. What systems are in place to support staff with the new ways of working?

Notes:

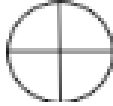
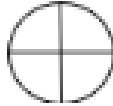
Action point	Action	Who	By When	Progress	Initial
1					
2					

Step 5: Resources

1. Are there any additional resources needed? E.g., more staffing, more equipment

2. If there are additional resources needed have you established how they will be agreed with the relevant people?

Notes:


Action point	Action	Who	By When	Progress	Initial
1					
2					

Step 6: Social Dimension of change

1. What actions have you taken, or will you need to take to engage and motivate staff?
2. How would you re-engage the staff if the performance of the change decreased?

Notes:

Action point	Action	Who	By When	Progress	Initial
1					

2					
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