
A Guide to QI

Everything you need to know to complete
your quality improvement project

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Introduction

Taking on the lead of a Quality Improvement (QI) project can feel a daunting task at the outset. Trying to work out what tools and techniques to use at the right time can be confusing, especially when you first dip your toes into the QI water. The good news is that if you follow some simple guidance and take notice of the QI Top Tips provided, you'll be ready to take your project from an initial idea all the way through to making sure the changes are sustainable in the future. Who knows, it may even lead to a submission to the annual QI Awards.

This easy to follow document sets out the 6 Stages of Project Management that you will work through along with any tools, templates or documentation that you may need to support you and your project team. The 6 project stages used in this document have been chosen deliberately to mirror the Project Management guidance delivered through the Quality, Service Improvement and Redesign (QSIR) training provided by the QI Academy.

In Quality Improvement there are literally hundreds of tools and techniques that you could use at different stages of your project. Whilst they all have their uses, we have selected only those that we feel give the best support to the majority of QI projects. All of the tools will be familiar to those colleagues who have completed any QSIR training, so no hidden surprises. It is not expected that all projects will use all of the tools suggested. Some may not be right for your project and that is absolutely fine. There are some however, like the QI Charter, that we feel are essential. Don't worry though, we will indicate in this document which tools are essential and which are optional.

We hope that this document supports your improvement work. Do however remember that if at any point during your project you would like any support, guidance or a listening ear, just give the QI Academy a call or drop us a message and we are more than happy to help.

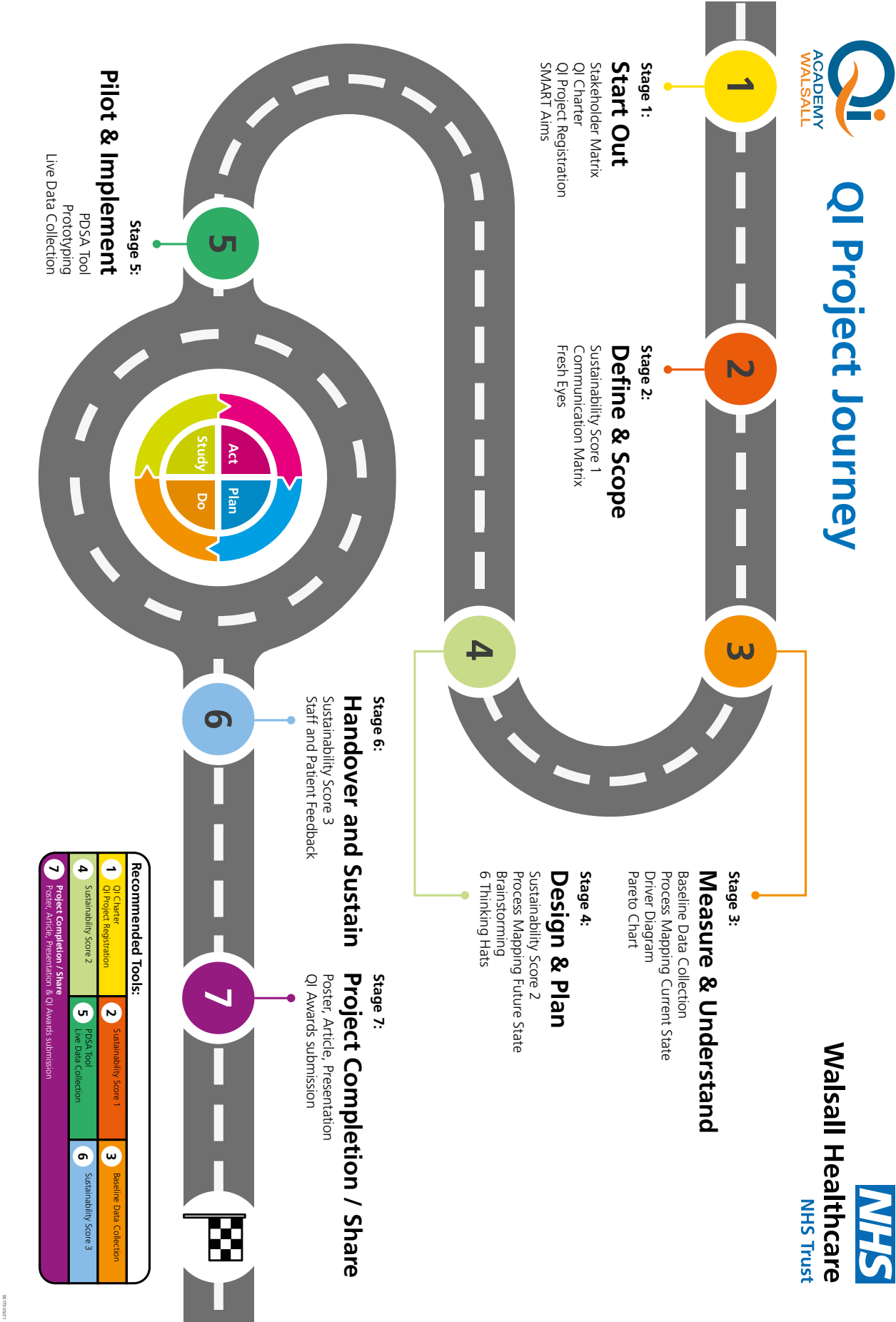
Good luck with your project.



Website:
www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/professionals/quality-improvement/

E-mail:
QIFaculty2@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk

Project Stages



Start Out

You've identified an area that you feel could be improved. The first thing to consider is who can work with you or support you with the project.

Identifying your Stakeholders

A Stakeholder Matrix can help you to build your project team and get the right people involved. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-stakeholder-analysis.pdf>

The tool we recommend is the Power vs Impact Matrix. This document can be added to throughout your project. Those in the manage/engage quadrant should be considered for your project group. A small group of interested and motivated colleagues are more likely to achieve the aims of a QI project than one person working on their own.

Stakeholder Mapping – Power vs Impact Matrix

POWER OVER THE PROJECT	Stakeholder has High Power over project	Satisfy Opinion formers. Keep them satisfied with what is happening and review your analysis of their position regularly	Manage / Engage Key stakeholders who should be fully engaged through full communication and consultation
	Stakeholder has Little / No Power over project	Monitor This group may be ignored if time and resources are stretched	Inform Patients often in this category. Increase their influence by <u>organising</u> into groups or taking active consultative work
		Project has Little or No Impact on stakeholder	Project has High impact on stakeholder
		IMPACTED BY THE PROJECT	

TOP TIP: Don't do this on your own. Work with others as part of a project group

Developing your Project Aim

A project team has been assembled and now you need to work together to create a **SMART** aim for your project.

- Specific** - A very clear statement of what you are trying to achieve.
- Measurable** - Has a numerical target that can be measured.
- Achievable** - Is realistic and attainable in the time allowed.
- Relevant** - Is linked to our strategic objectives.
- Time-bound** - Has a defined timeframe within which the aim should be achieved.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-developing-your-aims-statement.pdf>

TOP TIP: Writing a **SMART** aim is not as easy as it sounds. It might take a few goes at this to get it right. You can also modify this during your project if things change.

QI Charter

You are now ready to complete the first mandatory piece of paperwork for your project, the QI Charter. This document captures the most important information relating to your project and you will be able to use this to inform colleagues what your project is all about.

It is also required to allow you to submit your project for tracking on the Trust QI Project Registry. By registering your project using the below link, you will be able to share your project with others across the organisation whilst also making contact with the QI Academy who will offer support or guidance that you may need for your project.

[QI Project Submission Form](#)

Define and Scope

It is important to spend time developing your stakeholder matrix and your project charter. As you speak to others and understand their perspective of your project, you may modify the aim or the scope of your project and that is fine. One additional tool to aid this is the Communications Matrix. This will help you to consider how to approach each identified stakeholder to improve your chances of success.

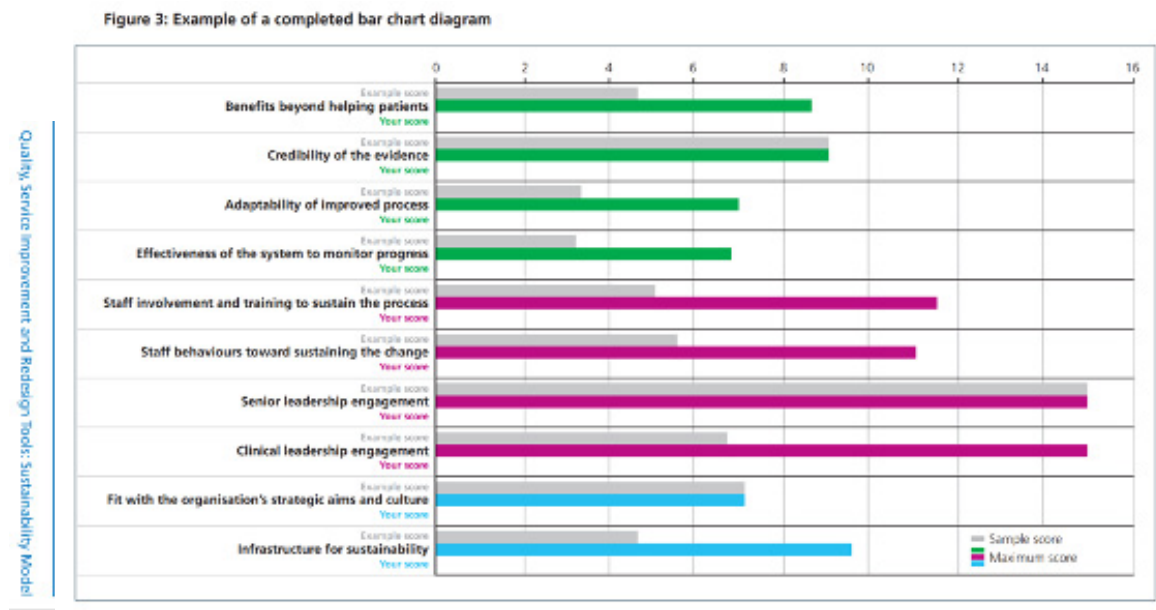
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-communications-matrix.pdf>

NHS Sustainability Model

Believe it or not even though you have only just started your QI project, it is vital that at this early stage you start to think about the sustainability of the project. The NHS Sustainability Model is a simple tool that will allow you to identify areas that you need to focus on to help ensure that when you come to the end of the project, things don't slip back into the old ways of working.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-sustainability-model.pdf>

This is a very simple tool that is best to be completed with your project team. This allows for different perspectives to be included. At this point don't worry too much about the score, but concentrate of those areas that have the greatest potential for improvement. The great thing about the tool is that it tells you what you need to do to get to a higher score. So once completed, the project team can work together on making improvements in the score, improving your project's sustainability.

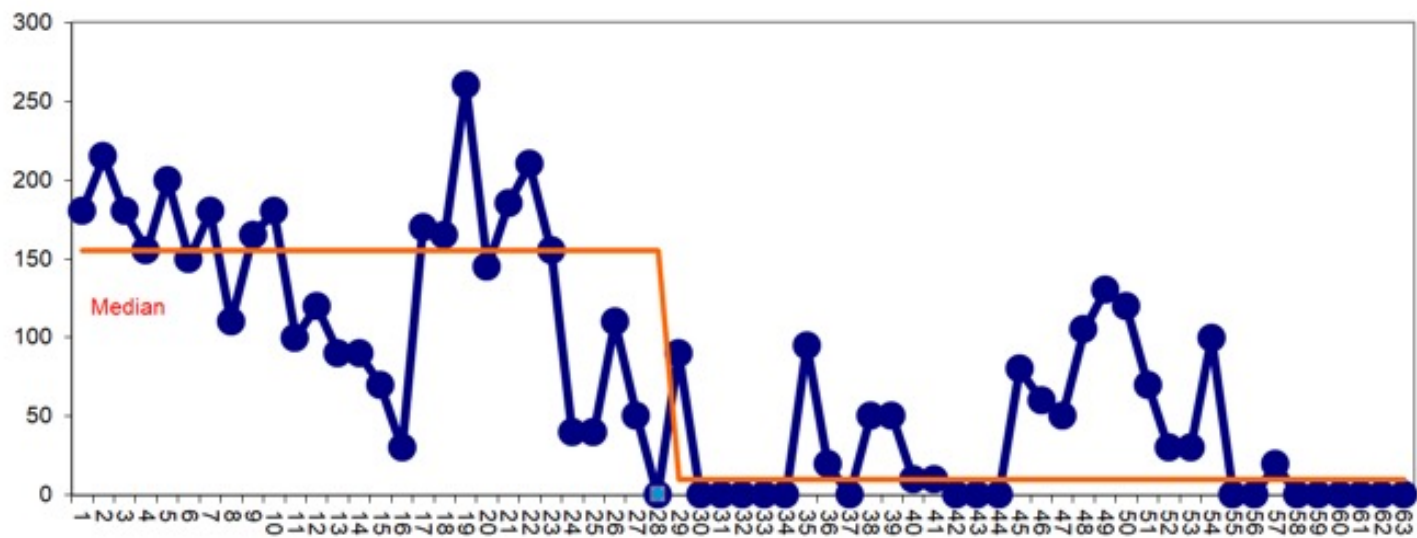


TOP TIP: We advise that you use the NHS Sustainability Model at three points during your project. The start, the middle and the end.

Using Data

Once you have identified your measures, and importantly before you try to implement any changes, it is vital to understand where you are now. We call this the baseline data. Only once we know where we are now can we set realistic targets about what we want to achieve in the future.

We also want to be able to see whether our change has made a difference to our data. We do this by looking at data over time. The time units may vary from project to project. For some it will be monthly data, others weekly, some daily but others could even be hourly data.



TOP TIP: For most people, viewing data on a chart as displayed above is much more useful than RAG charts or spreadsheets

The first tool to help with this is the Run Chart. It involves very simply plotting the data on a graph in the order they occur and then joining them up. This quickly tells us what is happening over time and allows us to review baseline performance. Once set up, you can now continue to measure performance and importantly once you start making changes you can see whether these are making an impact.

You may even decide to look at events over time, for example patient events as they happen or even the timeliness of document sharing as they happen. Whatever the metric, the important thing is to plot this data on a chart and review regularly, with your project team throughout.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-managing-variation.pdf>

A more advanced tool that builds on the principles of the run chart is the Statistical Process Control Chart or SPC Chart. This adds some additional features to help you understand whether the changes you see in the data are statistically significant or not.

If you need any help or support with setting up your chart or interpreting the results then just get in touch.

Design and Plan

Brainstorming

When it comes to thinking about change ideas you may already have some which is great. Other times the solution may not be so obvious so you will need to think creatively.

One way to start this process is to use brainstorming. You will generate lots of ideas and build on the ideas of others. It doesn't have to be a special event and can be incorporated at any time when the project team come together.

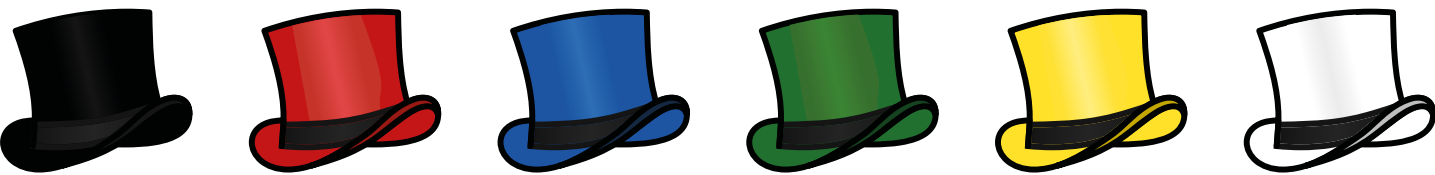
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-brainstorming.pdf>

TOP TIP: Criticism is ruled out in brainstorming sessions as this can stifle creativity.

Six Thinking Hats®

Having explored some options for change interventions, one way to further explore them is to use the concept of Six Thinking Hats®. This tool allows you to think with greater clarity about proposed change ideas from different points of view and with different perspectives. Six Thinking Hats® is a simple yet powerful tool created by Edward De Bono based on a principle of parallel thinking: everyone thinking in the same direction, from the same perspective, at the same time.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-six-thinking-hats.pdf>



Process Map – Part 2

Having previously mapped the current state, you could now work with the team to develop your future state map. This is your chance to look into the future and plan some changes to test. Remember this is the opportunity to remove any previously identified waste such as steps that do not add any value or duplication of work.



Pilot and Implement

PDSA Cycles – Plan – Do – Study – Act

One of the best tools to use when testing your ideas is the simple PDSA cycle, part of the Model for Improvement. It is a simple way of planning your test and understanding the impact of the change idea. The emphasis here is to ensure that you take time to plan the change fully before you do the test and subsequently pause again to understand the true impact. All 4 elements of the PDSA cycle should be considered and worked through in order.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-plan-do-study-act.pdf>

TOP TIP: Test on a really small scale. For example, start with one patient or one clinician during one afternoon clinic and increase the numbers as you refine the ideas.

Measurement for Improvement

How will you know if the change idea has made an improvement? Hopefully you have been continuing to use your run or SPC chart to monitor your interventions. This is the way to understand whether your tests of change are having the impact you were hoping for. So providing you are recording your data as you go and plotting the dots, your improvement journey will be being displayed perfectly as changes over time. Use the results to showcase your teams work to date and build additional supporters to join the improvement project team.

Use the data to inform your PDSA cycles and remember the importance of Acting on the results. Thinking about your most recent test of change you may choose to do one of 4 things.

Adopt - Keep the change as it has given you the desired results.

Adapt - The change has worked to some extent but can be developed further.

Abandon - STOP The proposed change hasn't worked. Let's try something else.

Amplify - It's worked. Let's test it out somewhere else or in a different setting.

TOP TIP: Once you are happy with a change, keep on measuring to ensure that the change is sustainable. Never stop too soon.

Handover and Sustain

Sustainability

Congratulations! You have successfully tested your change ideas and your data tells you that the changes have resulted in an improvement. To ensure that things don't slip back to the old ways, it's important to again return to your sustainability model to ensure you have done all you can to make this project stand the test of time. So recalculate your score and work on any final areas to maximize your chances of prolonged success.

Patient and Staff Feedback

Although your data has been positive, it's a great idea to check back in with your service users and colleagues. Understanding and checking the impact of the changes now will allow you to make any necessary modifications if required. It's also recommended that you thank anyone who has been involved for their time and effort.

It is important to share the successes with those who have helped make a difference.

Project Completion

Shout About It

It is really important that you share projects you have worked on within your service area and team. Perhaps create a presentation of your work or even a poster for display. These are by far the best ways of sharing your achievements. It would be wrong to go through the whole process and not tell people about your hard work or the outcomes. Remember to make sure that your project is registered on the QI Project Registry so that other colleagues can learn from your work.

Recognition

Finally, having made a poster already, it makes sense to submit it to the next QI Awards event or QI Conference. At these events you will have an opportunity to promote your work and have it recognized, possibly winning a prize in recognition of what you and your project team have achieved.

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/professionals/quality-improvement/quality-improvement-awards/>



QI Awards and QI Conference

The Trust regularly holds events at which you can share, promote and celebrate all the work that you have been doing to make an improvement in your area.

Look out for the adverts for the next opportunity to submit your work.

 www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.ukprofessionals/quality-improvement/

 QIFaculty@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk

 [@WalsallHCareIm1](https://twitter.com/WalsallHCareIm1)

Caring for Walsall together

