Guidance on the adoption and spread of innovation and improvement

Contents

West of England Academy

Part of the West of England Academic Health Science Network

"It is estimated that across the UK, a third of healthcare improvement projects never spread beyond their particular unit, a further third are embedded across their organisation but never spread further than that, and only the final third are spread across their own and other similar organisations. We want to change that"

Natasha Swinscoe
Chief Executive
West of England AHSN

Introduction

It is estimated that across the UK, a third of healthcare improvement projects never spread beyond their particular unit, a further third are embedded across their organisation but never spread further than that, and only the final third are spread across their own and other similar organisations.

Successfully spreading improvements and ensuring changes are sustained requires overcoming numerous challenges, such as:

- Creating an awareness of why the change is needed
- Ensuring those involved have a desire to support and participate in the change
- Knowledge of how to bring about change
- The skills and resources to bring about the change
- Ensuring processes to sustain the change

The guidance below sets out suggestions to be considered for the successful adoption and spread of innovation and improvement projects.

If you would like further guidance on this subject, please contact the West of England Academy team through innovation@weahsn.net.

# Create an awareness of why the change is needed
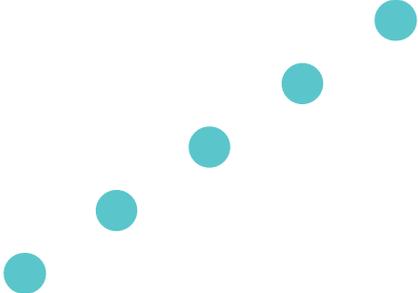
Ensure the proposed project addresses a health and care priority and there is evidence to demonstrate a need for wider adoption and spread.

Collect evidence to articulate this need and proposed change with a short compelling explanation, ie the 'why, what and how?'

- Does the proposed change support, lead or align with local strategic initiatives?

- Does the proposed change reflect the successful engagement of key stakeholders, including patients and members of the public?

- Does the proposed change address inclusion and diversity and consider the impact on equalities communities (as defined by the Public Sector Equality Duty)

- Does the evidence for the proposed change demonstrate tangible improvements to the health and care of local communities? Does it suggest a value to the taxpayer?
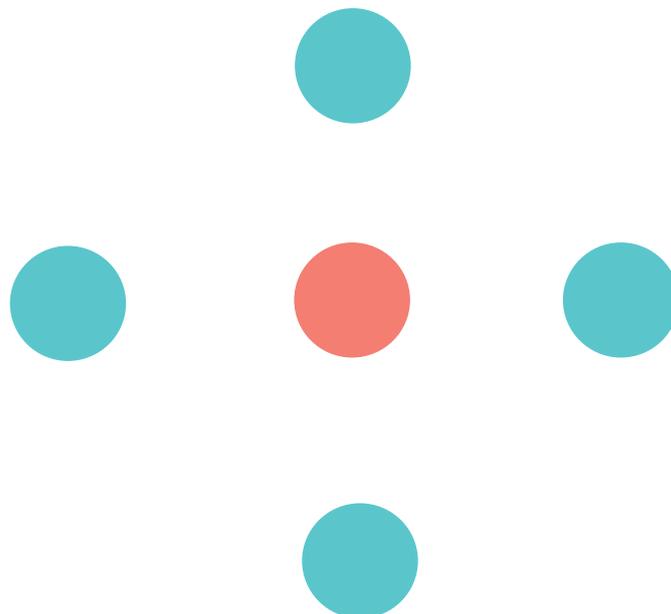
Ensure those involved have a desire to support and participate in the change
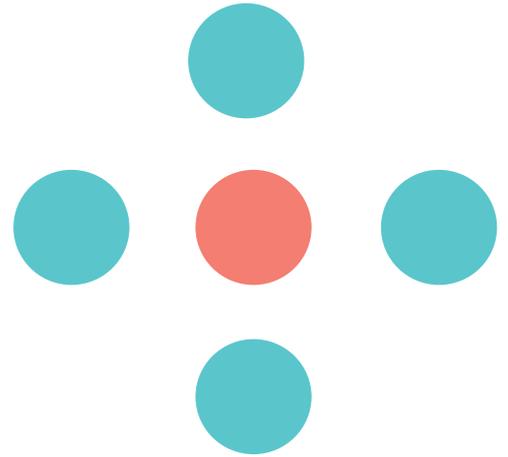
- Have you identified at least one department or organisation who you believe will be willing to be the first adopter of the innovation or improvement?

- Have you identified senior level sponsorship in the adopting department or organisation?

- Is there a senior stakeholder who has the influence to help overcome local challenges and barriers (including other leaders and staff)?

Secure the knowledge of how to bring about change

- Do you have a robust and clear project plan?

- Is there a clearly described focus on the behaviours and/or systems that need to change to achieve successful implementation and future sustainability of the innovation or improvement?

- Does the plan set out the actions required to implement the innovation or improvement within realistic timeframes – including a contingency where appropriate?

- Has baseline data been collected and do you know the measures you will use throughout the project to measure the change? It helps the team to have regular data, it is inspiring when things are going well, and it helps identify that you might need to change (using PDSA – see below) if the data is less favourable.

- Has the screening process been carried out to assess what impact the innovation or improvement may have on people from equalities groups and if a full Equalities Impact Assessment is needed?

- Have appropriate public and patient contributors been identified to provide ideas and critique from a non-professional perspective and to support implementation and longer-term sustainability of the innovation or improvement?

- Have all key stakeholders been identified and is there a compelling story to engage them in supporting the project?

- Do all relevant stakeholders agree with the project aim and the plan?
- Does the plan include a clear, coherent, and realistic approach for communicating with all key stakeholders on progress?

- Do you have a robust and clear evaluation strategy on how you will measure the impact of the project from the outset?

- Does the evaluation plan capture appropriate data to demonstrate that the innovation or improvement has been achieved?

- Does the plan include an understanding of the assumptions and external factors that will affect successful implementation and future sustainability of the innovation or improvement (eg availability of resources, competing priorities)?

- Does the plan reflect 'measures of impact on equalities communities' in accordance with an existing Equalities Impact Assessment?

- Does the plan identify risks and issues (including potential barriers) and the agreed mitigating actions?

- Will there be opportunities to test and strengthen implementation – for example, a plan to use a specific improvement methodology such as Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA)?

Identify the skills and resources to bring about change

- Do you have the ability to implement desired behaviour or system change?

- Is there sufficient resource available and allocated to support implementation and local adoption of the innovation or improvement?

- Has an appropriate local clinical, academic or management champion, with sufficient gravitas and influencing skills, been identified to lead the implementation and local adoption (and maybe local adaption where required) of the innovation or improvement?

- Are there plans for any relevant staff training/education to support the implementation and adoption, where appropriate?

- Have relevant organisational resources (including engaged, empowered, and capable team members) been secured to ensure implementation and adoption can be achieved – with adequate contingency?

- Is funding available to pay for dissemination and rolling out the innovation or improvement?

- Could the innovation or improvement be adapted by others to help support its sustainability?
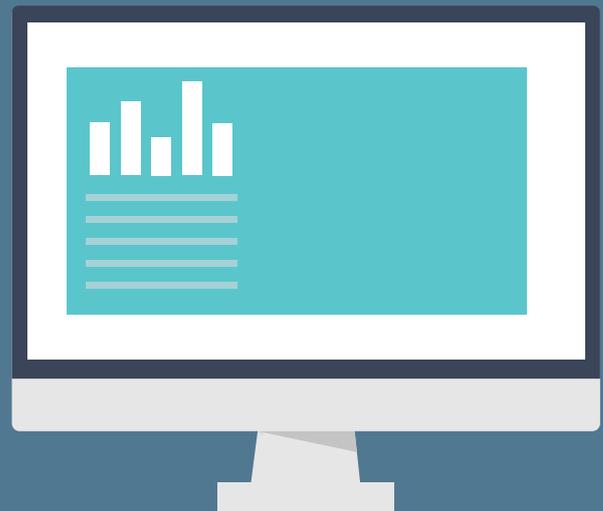
Ensure the processes to sustain the change

- Is there strong and effective leadership in place to spread the innovation or improvement? For example, has a relevant expert with sufficient gravitas and influencing skills been identified to lead the spread?

- If funding is required for the relevant expert, has this been sourced and confirmed?

- Have any other necessary resources (people, funding, etc) from outside the adoption organisation been identified and secured?

- Is there a plan to capture new learning from the spread process?

NB Experience shows that the adoption of new and innovative ways of working are best seen as part of the service improvement rather than a process of, 'rolling out,' a proven approach.

The innovation journey goes from identifying opportunities for an innovation, coming up with ideas, prototyping and testing, right through to implementing your innovation in real-world settings and scaling to achieve system-wide impact. The West of England Academy has compiled free resources to support each of the four phases of the innovation journey: invention, innovation, improvement and impact. This is not a linear journey – some projects may jump back and forth between phases.
Visit our website to explore your innovation journey.
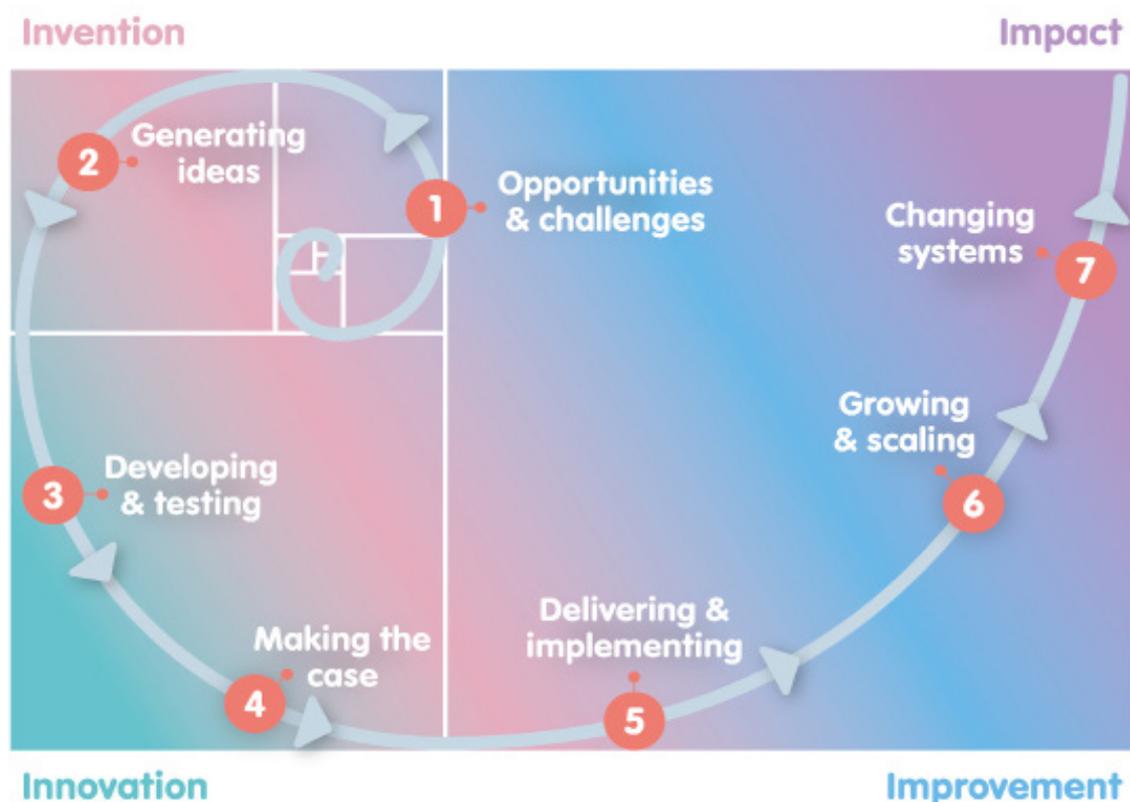
Resources to support innovation and improvement projects ›››

Within the West of England AHSN, our Academy offers a wide range of free support to the region's healthcare sector to ensure the very best care and experience for patients alongside the provision of best value services through innovtion and improvement.

This includes toolkits and resources to help colleagues and innovators across our membership network and the region to think and work innovatively and implement new ways of working using quality improvement methods and tools. A key element of our offer is the provision of learning resources – online, through virtual webinars and workshops, and face to face events.

The Academy encourages informal networks where colleagues across our region can learn together and take the knowledge gained and skills developed to collaborate in ways that deliver better and safer patient care. The online toolkit provides resources mapped out along the 'innovation journey' (illustrated through our innovation spiral on page 6).

The quality improvement (QI) toolkit provides templates and guidance on using QI tools to support your project work, such as Plan-Do-Study Act (PDSA) cycles, driver diagrams and stakeholder mapping.

The Innovation and Growth team provides guidance and resources to budding innovators with innovative healthcare ideas that they wish to grow, as well as companies looking to see their products or services adopted by the NHS. The Innovation Exchange website houses a range of resources, funding challenges and opportunities to connect and attend training. Sign up to the Innovation newsletter to stay up-to-date.

The Service and System Transformation team supports a range of healthcare projects along the innovation journey.

Sign up to the West of England AHSN newsletter for news, events and activities from across the organisation.
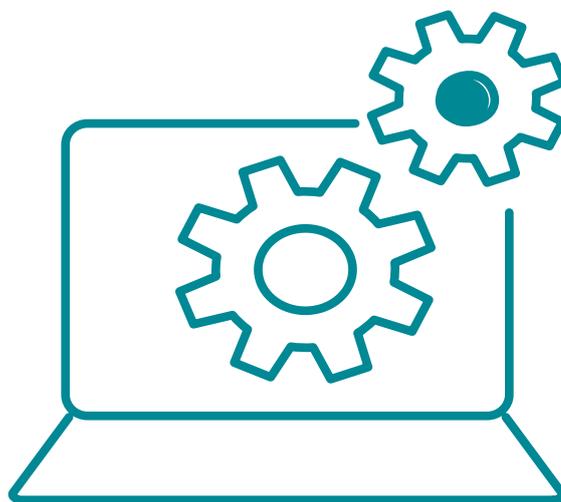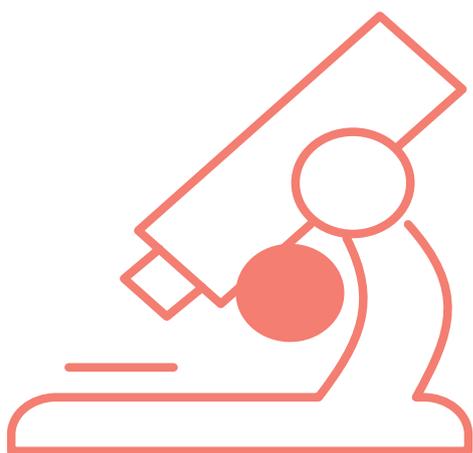
References

- [Scale up the best to achieve Long-Term plan goals (Paul Burstow, 27 February 2019)](#)

- [The Spread and Sustainability of Quality Improvement in Healthcare – Quality Improvement Hub](#)

- [PReCePT Programme Lessons Learnt – West of England Academic Health Science Network](#)

- [Evidence into Practice Challenge 2019/20, Applicants guidance - West of England Academic Health Science Network](#)

- [Adoption and Spread of Innovation in the NHS – The Kings Fund (Ben Collins, 16 January 2018)](#)

- [The spread challenge: How to support the successful uptake of innovations and improvements in healthcare – The Health Foundation (Tim Horton, John Illingworth and Will Warburton, September 2018)](#)

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