# What makes a good project?

The
Health
Foundation

# Consider your audience

Keep it short and simple!

While you can assume that your audience has a general working knowledge of the health and social care sector, keep your language and terminology easy to understand, explaining any acronyms and technical terms.

- Can you put yourself into the mind of the person reading your proposal and think about what will appeal to them?

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## Handy hints

A helpful guide to writing in plain English can be found here:
**www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/reportsguide.pdf**

- Use first person narrative.

  "We received some great feedback from our walking and talking project and we've refined our second iteration based on that."

- Include different perspectives.

  Think about which voices can add credibility to your proposal and show that you have thought about the views of key stakeholders.
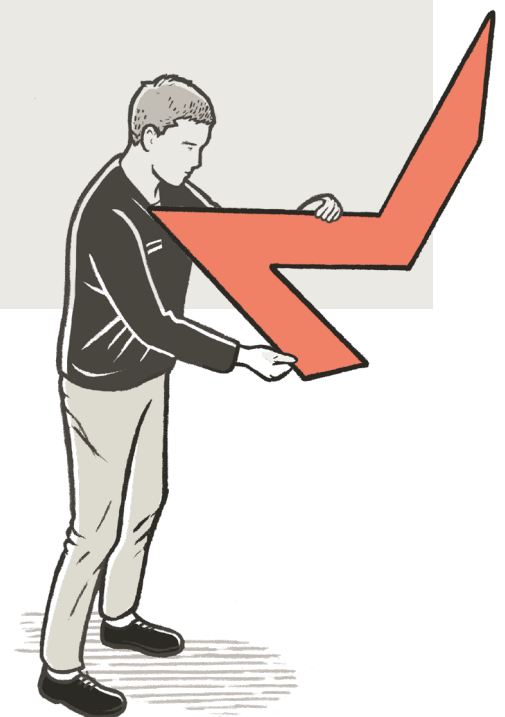
# Define the challenge or opportunity

It's important to demonstrate that your project is addressing a significant challenge or opportunity and therefore is necessary.

- Who does the challenge or opportunity involve? (eg patients, carers, clinical staff.)

- What issues does the challenge present? (eg waste of money/time/resources, reduced time with patients, lack of real-time information, lack of evidence.)

- Why does it matter? (what makes this issue important and relevant, why does it need focus now, what will happen if it's not addressed.)

- Consider making reference to frameworks, models or concepts to provide the rationale for choosing this challenge or opportunity.

- Outline the nature and severity of the specific challenge or opportunity that is going to be addressed. Include important and relevant statistics eg "42% of people with Type 2 diabetes are not confident managing their condition". Think whether statistics would be more powerful at a local or national level.

- Consider reflecting using the '**5 Whys**' approach (or an equivalent tool) to gain a true understanding of root causes of the challenge or opportunity.

- The Liberating Structures '**Nine-Whys**' tool could also be used to reflect on the purpose of the work and can support understanding of how it relates to others.

## Handy hints

# Explain your idea

A clear description of your proposed idea and how it will address the challenge or opportunity outlined.

- What is the specific aim and strategy of the project? It's worth getting someone a bit removed from your project to have a read and check that the explanation makes sense.

- How have you gone about checking that your idea is desirable and feasible – have other attempts been made which you're building on?

- What is your rationale for why your proposal will work or can you highlight a compelling reason to test this idea? Some projects do this with a driver diagram or theory of change.

- Do you have a high-level overview of how the project will be implemented (and by whom), with an idea of the project delivery and improvement or engagement methods you expect to use?

- Ensure you have read the *Call for applications.*

- Briefly describe the local environment, how the activity is currently being delivered and the team working on it to help the reader understand and engage with your project.

- Consider how the impact might be measured, analysed and evaluated.

## Handy hints
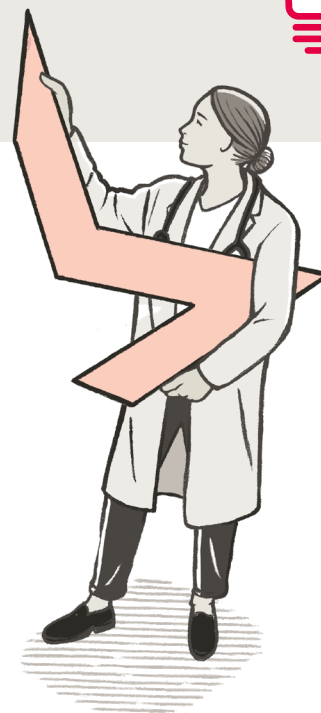
# Reference evidence and experience

Innovating for Improvement is seeking projects which are bringing a new approach to the particular health or social care setting, so you need to consider the needs of service users and the wider context within which the project will be delivered. This can be demonstrated through referring to evidence and the experience of key stakeholders. This can be a combination of formal research (eg demonstrating that a particular concept has not been used in the selected health care setting) and practical experience.

- How have you engaged or do you plan to engage key people, groups or organisations to understand what's needed and develop your plans?

- Do you have a summary of current knowledge around the challenge or opportunity? (eg published evidence, examples of where this has worked elsewhere)

- Does this work link to any national or local guidance?

- **The Health Foundation** and **NHS Improvement** websites have lots of examples of existing work. There are many places to look to learn more about the evidence and practice-based experience behind the idea you're proposing.You can also look at **Q Resources** and **Journal & Learning** pages to get you started.

**Handy hints**

# Prepare your approach

There are different methodologies and approaches to project planning; you should consider which one might work for you and your idea. At a minimum, you should know:

- **Who** will deliver/ be involved in the project? Identify the people and estimate their required time commitment.

- **What** resources will be needed (eg staff time, travel costs)?

- **Where** is the project going to be implemented?

- **When** will the project start and finish and when are the key milestones? Consider using a framework such as a Gantt chart to visualise this.

- **Why** this project? Identify the reason(s) why this project needs the outlined resources.

- Don't feel the pressure to promise a very large scope; it is likely to already be ambitious! If you feel the project is starting to get unwieldy, you could consider using **Min Specs** or another similar method to consider what to prioritise.

- If you're struggling to get started, check out the helpful planning resources on the **NHS Improvement resources** page, **2020 Delivery website** or the **Liberating Structures website**.

**Handy hints**

# Budget and risk management

You can find guidance on how to set up a project budget and the budget template on AIMS, the application system, where the budget template is saved.

When identifying risks, be realistic and honest about delivery challenges. We know making things happen in health and care can be messy and you might be doing this on top of a day job. Therefore, you should think about how you can maximise the chance of successful delivery.

- Have you considered any technical or ethical aspects of implementation and how they will be addressed? Will specific approval be required?

- As well as direct project risks, spend some time thinking about any possible unintended consequences and how these will be monitored, understood and managed.

**Handy hints**
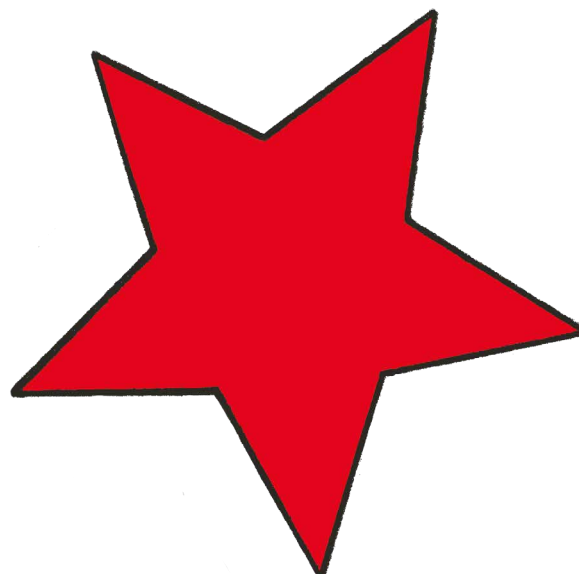
The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK.

Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality health care that can be equitably accessed. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen. We use what we know works on the ground to inform effective policymaking and vice versa.

We believe good health and health care are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people's skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population.