

The Model for Improvement and PDSA Cycles



What is the Model for Improvement?

It's a simple framework that helps individuals and teams drive continuous improvement through the development, testing and implementation of changes. The model can be applied to small and large-scale projects, and is made up of two parts.

The first part consists of three questions that help us identify what you want to achieve, what ideas might make a difference, and what you'll measure to work out if the change has made an improvement.

The second part is the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle. This model enables you to rapidly test the changes/ideas and smooth out any problems prior to implementing a change. The fact that PDSA is cyclical means that changes can be refined and improved on by repeating the cycles of testing and learning.

Why test this way?

Testing changes using PDSA cycles enables you to:

- Safely test and adapt your ideas
- Test on a small scale until you are confident that your idea is working
- Safely identify unanticipated outcomes
- Evaluate resources requirements and any costs
- Build a shared understanding
- Invite all affected by the change to trial and provide feedback
- Increase stakeholder buy-in
- Reduce overall implementation time

The Model for Improvement

First part - Questions

What are we trying to accomplish?

This question will help you to define your problem and work out what you want to achieve. It will guide you to think about data that will show if your change has led to an improvement.

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

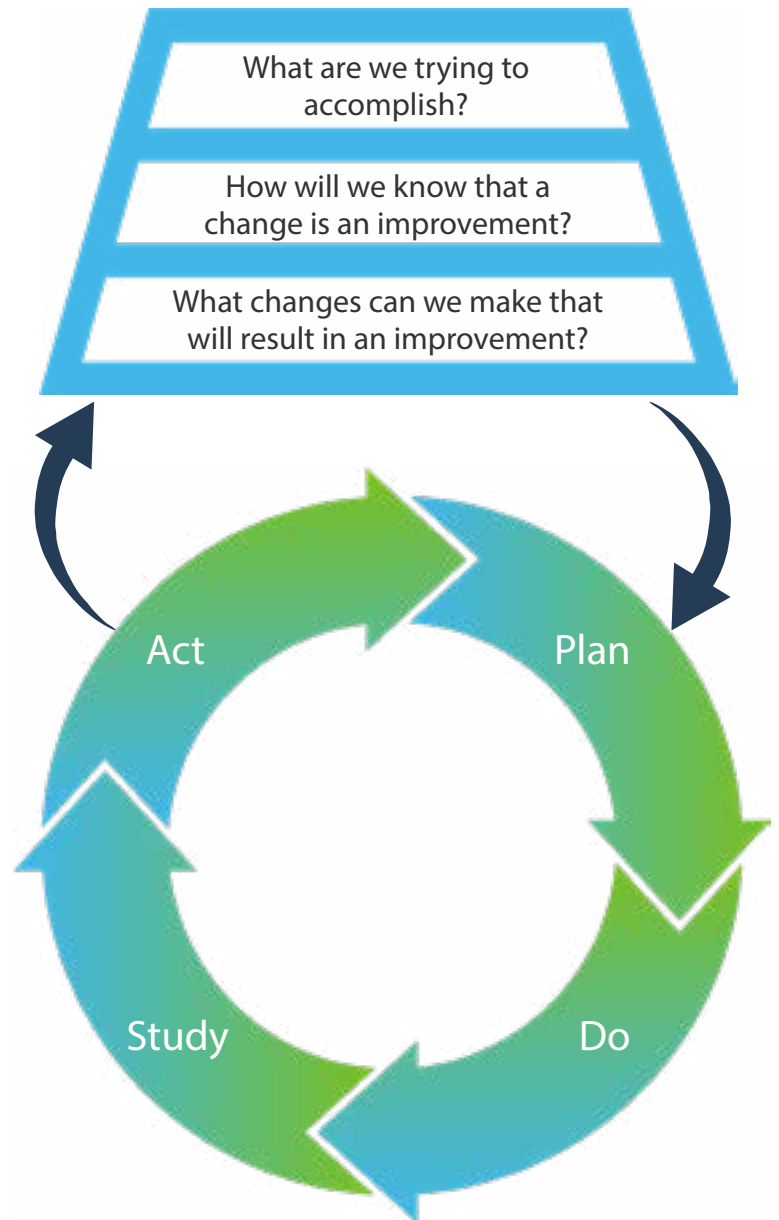
You will need data to show that change has made an improvement.

It is important to collect data before you make any changes.

This stage of data collection is known as Baseline Data. As you start to make changes, continue to collect data and compare it to your Baseline Data. This will be a great way of showing if the change has led to an improvement.

What changes can we make that will result in an improvement?

This is where you can test your ideas for making change to see if they work, prior to implementation.



The Model for Improvement

Second part - PDSA Cycles

Plan

- State the purpose of the test of change
- Make predictions about what will happen and why
- Plan what will be tested, who will test the change, when and where it will be tested
- Identify what data you will need to collect

Do

- Try the plan out on a small scale
- Trial your change idea
- Document what happened, including problems and unexpected observations
- Collect and begin to analyse data

Study

- Review the data and study the results
- Complete your analysis of the data
- Compare the data to your predictions
- Summarise and reflect on what happened

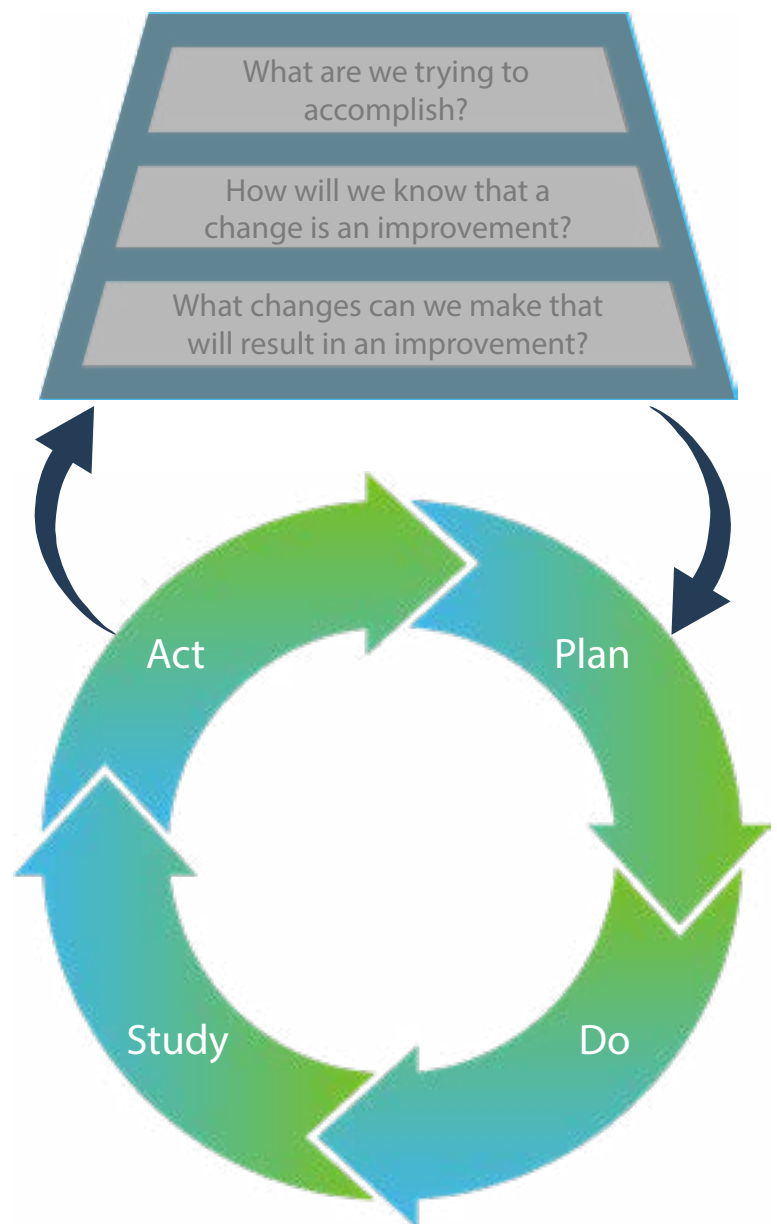
Act

At this stage, you either:

- Abandon - You can abandon at any stage of the cycle and start again with a new idea.
- Adapt - Use the PDSA cycle to iterate and test your idea until you are ready to Adopt.
- Adopt - When you've finished making adaptations and the data shows that your idea has led to an improvement, you are ready to Adopt the change.

Sustain

Following adoption of a change idea, keep measuring to show the improvement has sustained.



Example of PDSA cycle

Trialling a newly developed form in a Falls Clinic

	Plan	Do	Study	Act
Cycle One	In tomorrow's Falls Clinic test the draft form with one clinician and one patient.	The clinician selects one patient to test the form.	The clinician studies what happened. What went well? What needs changing?	Adapt - changes are made, in preparation to trial again.
Cycle Two	Next week ask the same clinician to test the form on five patients.	The clinician selects five patients to test the form.	The clinician studies what happened. What went well? What needs changing?	Adapt - make the suggested changes and trial again with two clinicians for one day.
Cycle Three	In the Friday morning clinic ask two different clinicians to test the form for all patients attending.	The clinician selects five patients to test the form.	The clinician studies what happened. What went well? What needs changing?	Adapt - further changes are made, in preparation to trial with all clinicians the following week.
Cycle Four	Next week ask all clinicians to trial the form on all patients attending the clinic.	The form is used for all patients visiting the clinic for one week.	The clinician studies what happened. What went well? What needs changing?	Adapt - further changes are made, in preparation to trial with all clinicians the following week.

If the idea (in this case a new form) is working, then you keep Adapting the form until you are in a position to Adopt and implement the change.

Email us if you would like more information or support:
quality.improvement@solent.nhs.uk