NHS
Improving Quality

LEARNING HANDBOOK
Guidance and tools to support systematic learning before, during and after project activity in health and care

Most significant change

'Most significant change' (MSC) is a monitoring and evaluation technique that involves the collection and analysis of a number of stories, submitted by members of the organisation.

Tool	Time	Resources	Physicality	Interactivity
MSC	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

When?

MSC is usually used throughout projects that are complex and that may have caused a number of significant changes to the subject matter or where relevant, on the community or population involved.

It is a particularly useful tool if you believe that there may be valuable changes that have occurred that may not be captured or monitored in formal corporate processes.

Who?

All members of a project team should be involved.

If possible it can also be beneficial to have relevant stakeholders involved to present additional or differing insights into the level of impact a project is having / has had.

How?

The overall time for the session required is around two days a month.

The first stage of MSC is to connect with everyone to be involved; introduce them to the concept of MSC and raise interest in the process. If you're involving external stakeholders, they in particular need to be engaged to produce the best recollections of impact and change to get the most value from the MSC.

The second stage is to ask those most directly involved (or on the 'ground') to submit stories based on one key question, e.g. 'In your opinion, what has been the most significant change for participants in the programme over the past month?' Those who are submitting stories may find our storytelling resource useful and should be encouraged to explain in-depth *why* they believe this has been the most significant change.

Each story is then to be presented to each rank (see diagram on page 2) where at each stage it is discussed and analysed. Stories are filtered during this process of review from one organisational level to another, each time carrying forward only the stories felt to present the most significant changes.
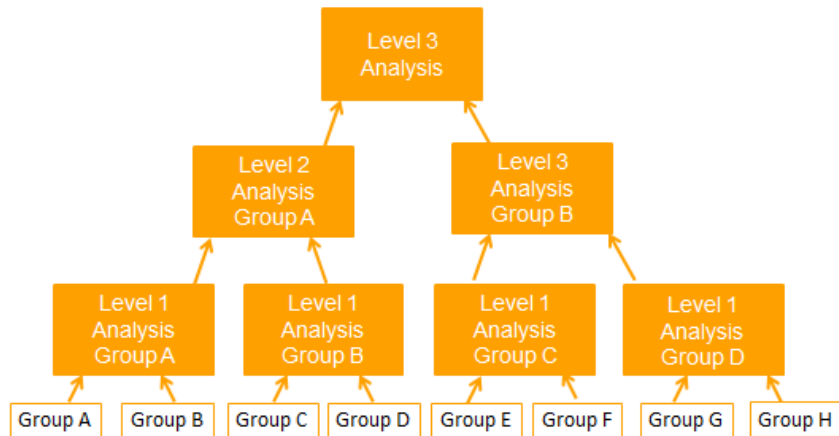
Top tips:

- After each stage of analysis and selection, feedback should be given to participants so that they understand why the contributions were taken forward. All participants should be able to access the feedback

- Ensure you provide those who create the stories with sufficient guidance and training regarding storytelling – the aim is to make them feel comfortable and confident in telling their story

- Some people may not want to pick one story that they believe is the 'most significant' as they may not want to appear to be criticising other's work. If this is a barrier you feel you may face, you might wish to allow the analysis groups to make their selection via a private voting system so that they can remain anonymous

- Feedback is important not only to ensure everyone involved remains engaged, but also so that others are more likely to participate in the future if they feel their contributions are seriously considered

Further reading:
- Rick Davis & Jess Dart – Most significant change technique: A guide to its uses