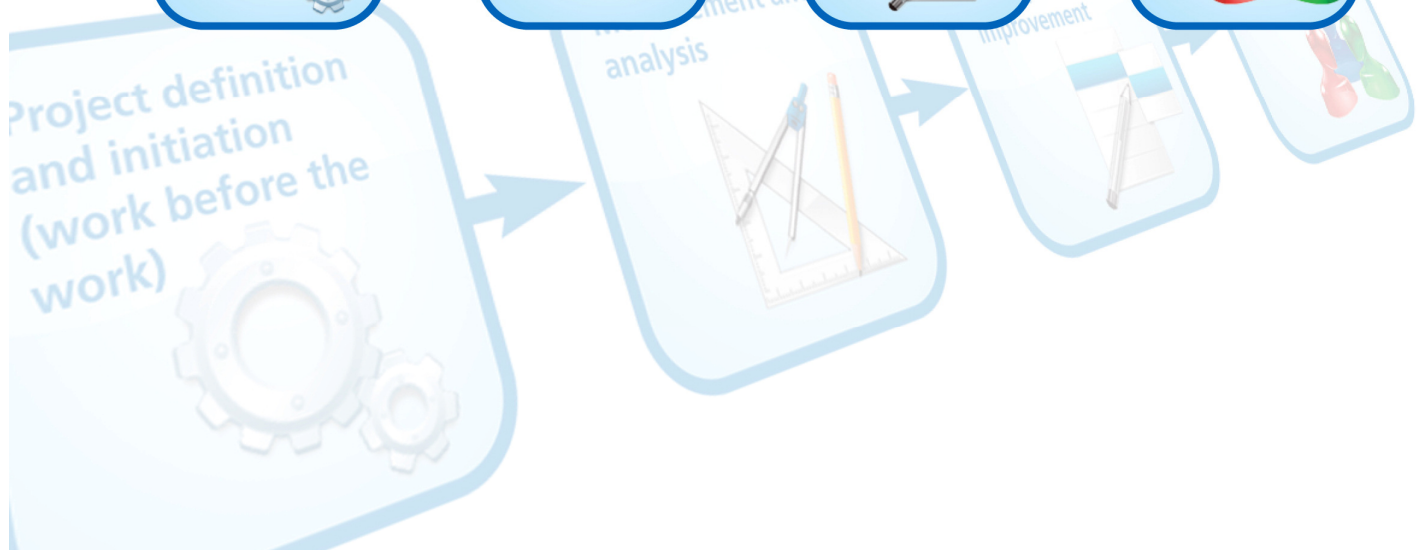
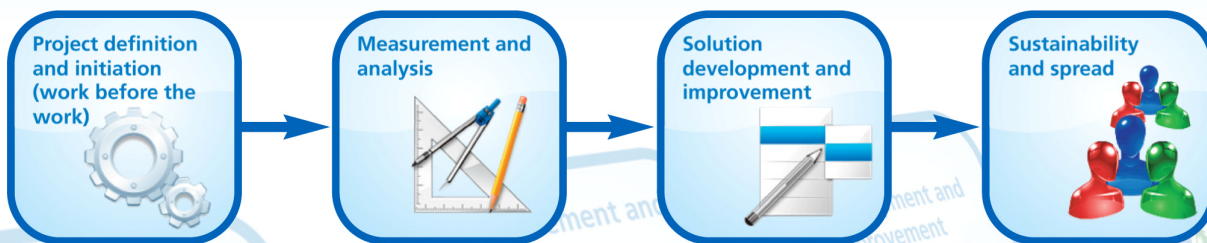




# NHS Improvement Resource – Force Field Analysis Instructions

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## Planning for change: Force Field Analysis Tool

### Part 1: Instructions

*This tool has three parts: the Instructions, the Worksheet and the map.*

#### How to use this tool:

Force field analysis was developed by Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist who, amongst other achievements, established and directed the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1940's.

#### **Purpose:**

A force field analysis is a tool for planning when and where to act to achieve a change. The analysis includes creating a map of the forces helping and hindering the change, and then prioritizing those forces so the change can be most effectively achieved.

A special aspect of force field analysis is its emphasis on *identifying and lowering barriers between one's current status and the desired change*. This lowers the total energy needed to achieve change and thereby makes change easier.

#### **Time and effort:**

An individual can complete a rough force field analysis in approximately 60 minutes. You might choose this approach if the change is a personal one. If you're facing a group or team project, you might want to do a quick sketch to see if this tool looks like the right one to pursue with your group.

A group can complete a force field analysis in a half-day. This will take the group through the steps of goal assessment, forces identification and mapping, and prioritizing key forces. From there, the group can create action plans for the key priorities in implementing the change.

#### **Materials:**

To complete this tool as an individual or with a group, you'll need: two templates (worksheet and force field map) provided here, 1 piece of flipchart paper, Post-It note pad, writing utensils.



## The Steps in Force Field Analysis

**Read the instructions below, and then look at both the Worksheet and Map templates to help you understand the process. The Map template includes a completed sample.**

To complete the force field analysis you will work back and forth between the Worksheet and the Map. For individual use, the Worksheet and Map can be printed out on regular paper. With a group you may find it helpful to transfer the Map diagram to a flipchart and complete the Map there.

1. *On the Worksheet.* Identify your current state and the desired goal state relative to this change.
2. *On the Map.* Enter descriptions of the current and desired states in the center and upper sections, respectively, of the force field map.
3. *On the Worksheet.* Identify and list the forces acting to support the change and those acting to hinder the change. Define ‘force’ broadly, from real tangible things like “no money” to more specific things like “key leader isn’t paying attention to this change” or “staff morale.”
4. Label those forces either “supporting” or “resisting” -- resisting if it is holding the current state *back* from the goal state and supporting if the force is acting to move the current state *towards* the goal state.
5. Write each individual force on a single Post-It note. Put an arrow pointing *downward* on each resisting force Post-It and an arrow pointing *upward* on each supporting force.
6. Put the Post-It notes on the Force Field Map, placing the “resisting” items in the area between the current and goal states, and the “supporting” items in the area below the current state. Arrange the “resisting” and “supporting” forces in whatever order seems to make intuitive sense, perhaps clustering some, or simply putting them side by side if no other pattern emerges. If new forces come to mind, add them to your list of forces and add their Post-Its to the chart.
7. Finish the analysis, using the steps below. You’ll choose which forces to address in order to move from your current to your desired state.



## Finish the Analysis

The Map you have now shows the forces that hold the status quo (your current state) in balance. You can move from the current to the goal state either by *increasing the supporting forces* or *decreasing the resisting forces* that prevent movement towards the desired goal. How to choose what forces to address? Lewin's guidance is as follows:

- a. The collection of supporting and resisting forces represents a total amount of energy that holds the current state away from the desired state.
  - b. Ease of change is likely enhanced if the total amount of energy in the system is kept to a minimum.
- The best route to moving towards the desired state is to first look for resisting forces that can be lessened or removed from the system. Doing this allows the supporting forces to move the change towards the desired state.

First, look for key resisting forces that can be lowered or removed. Next, look at resisting and supporting forces according to how important the force is and how easy it is to change. The more important and easier the change, the more attractive the force is for consideration. However, this does not rule out addressing big, hard forces; sometimes this analysis shows that's just where you need to go. Given these criteria, prioritize the forces that need to be addressed to achieve the change.

Enter this prioritization onto your worksheet. Use a numerical rating of the priorities from most important to least, or give them high, medium and low categories.

Create a plan for addressing as many of these priority areas, in an appropriate sequence, as you believe your resources justify.



### Option: Advanced Force Field

In advanced force field analysis, you add two levels of sorting to your work at the end of step 5 (upward and downward arrows). The advanced process offers a clearer evaluation of individual forces to help you prioritize them.

1. First, review your Worksheet list of forces and rate each force in terms of *power* or *importance* to holding or moving the current state towards the desired state. Use the labels low, medium or high.
2. Now review the same list, and rate each force according to how *easy* it is to address. Label each as low, medium or high.
3. Add these labels to the Post-Its.
4. Use the Advanced Force Field Map below to place the Post-Its. The advanced map includes areas for each combination of importance and ease-of-change.

### Part 2: Next Steps after Force Field Analysis

For each force that will be addressed, create an action plan for addressing the force, listing what activities will take place, who is responsible for them, and the date when they will be completed. Periodically revisit the force field map to assess current versus desired state progress, review progress on the various forces, analyze how the progress on each force affects the rest, and any adjustments to your implementation plan you want to make.



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