

Sustainable Improvement Team  
and the Horizons Team

# LEADING LARGE SCALE CHANGE:

A practical guide

Executive summary

#LargeScaleChange

A guide to leading large scale change through complex health and social care environments

## Executive summary

1. *Leading Large Scale Change: a practical guide* has been produced by the NHS England Sustainable Improvement Team and the Horizons Team, NHS England, to help all those involved in seeking to achieve transformational change in complex health and care environments. This is a fully revised update of the original 2011 publication, responding to current health and care policy and practice, and introducing new concepts, tools and techniques to help deliver successful large scale change. It is relevant to all those involved in transformational change programmes such as Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and the development of new care models, and has relevance across public services.
2. The times are changing in health and social care – and so are the ways in which we can use models that support the change process. This 2017 edition of the guide introduces a new organising framework that brings together two leading change models – the Large Scale Change Model and the Change Model – to help achieve sustainable change.
3. The Large Scale Change Model can help support transformational change across complex environments. It has emerged from the learning and lived experience of many system leaders who have strived for sustainable transformational change. The model identifies several key stages in the leadership of large scale change. The Change Model is an integral, interconnected framework that works with the Large Scale Change Model to support sustainable transformation. This model has eight elements that should be considered when leading change: our shared purpose, leadership by all, spread and adoption, improvement tools, project and performance management, measurement, system drivers, and the need to motivate and mobilise.
4. Large scale change is the process of mobilising a large collection of individuals, groups and organisations toward a vision of a fundamentally new future state. Due to its size, scale and level of complexity it is something much greater than traditional, incremental service improvement. A series of 10 principles of large scale change are provided in the guide to aid understanding of the nature of the challenges and processes involved.
5. A comprehensive round-up is provided of all the latest thinking and practical approaches and tools that can be used in advancing large scale change. This publication refresh includes:
  - Updates on the leading transformational change models
  - The latest thinking from national and global improvement experts and change leaders
  - New tools, techniques and tips to help effectively progress large scale change programmes
  - Case studies and learning that will help leaders and change agents in health and care and across public services
  - Signposting to a host of new online resources including videos, presentations and digital media links.

6. There are many factors that can assist and enhance the creation of the right conditions for large scale change. The world in which we are operating is increasingly dynamic where we are faced with many complex dilemmas. Across the world, change is happening at a faster rate and becoming more 'disruptive' through the use of digital tools. It is increasingly being seen that the most effective leaders of change are those who can build and use networks to create relationships. Research suggests that being an effective change agent is now less to do with traditional hierarchical power or positional authority and more to do with ability to influence through a network. Utilising social movements may help us build our networks and encourage support for our transformation efforts. Social movement thinking is about building activists: connecting with people's core values and motivations and mobilising their own internal energies and drivers for change.
7. The current environment for large scale change can be characterised as one where two kinds of power are in tension: old power (based on positional authority and hierarchy) and new power (based on networks, social movements and communities). As leaders of change in health and care, we need to be able to operate at this interface of old and new power.
8. In attempting to advance large scale change we can make a distinction between 'commitment' and 'compliance' organisations. Compliance organisations tend to rely on rigid hierarchies, systems and standardised procedures for co-ordination and control. In commitment organisations, the co-ordination and control mechanisms are based on shared goals, values and a sense of purpose.
9. Organisations are encouraged to develop open and innovative 'change platforms' rather than traditional 'change programmes'. Too often 'change management' or a 'change programme' is based on the premise that a small number of people can envision the outcomes sought, that the change process can be controlled and that people have neutral starting points in the change. History demonstrates that radical, transformational change cannot be pre-ordained in this way. As the Large Scale Change Model shows, change is a deeply emergent process and we have to test, fail, learn and evolve as we go.
10. The most frequently occurring result in large scale change is that the effort runs out of energy and fades away. Building energy for change for the long haul is one of the most important considerations for change leaders. Leaders are encouraged to tap into the positive energy for change that exists among the people involved and unleash it for the benefit of achieving the shared purpose.

11. A shared purpose adds depth and breadth to a vision and case for change. Often we build a case for change based on a 'burning platform' or what really has to change. Focusing on our shared purpose starts us thinking about our shared ambition – not just what we want to achieve but why that is important. To build a shared purpose you need to engage others effectively in your change. Constructing your narrative through transformational story telling will help appeal to specific audiences and broaden support. 'Framing' is the process by which leaders construct, articulate and put across their message in a powerful and compelling way in order to win people to their cause and call them to action.
12. For any change agent in health and care, 'readiness for change' is a key issue. It is the extent to which the environment we are working in is actually receptive to change and therefore, whether the change can be delivered, sustained and spread further. If you are involved with leading large-scale change in public services, whether across geographical areas or diverse services, you will have to persuade people to see things from your point of view, and accept that other people have perspectives and priorities – and even language – that differ from yours. The change you are seeking is likely to be complex and multi-layered, with easy solutions thin on the ground.
13. In this scenario of a complex public services environment, systems leadership is required. System leaders are able to think beyond their organisational role and see themselves as part of a wider system. Leaders in this context are able to see their remit as connecting the broader system across health, social care, housing, emergency services and other sectors that might be able to help.
14. Change leaders often consider structure (organisations, policies, roles, resources) and processes (patient journeys, procedures, flows of information) in their large scale change planning but may tend to give less thought to patterns of behaviour (mindsets, trust, power, conflict, and learning). If we want change to be transformational, we need to consider structure, processes and patterns of behaviour as the combination of these aspects can make or break change efforts.
15. Participation, co-production and diversity should underpin all of our work. By bringing local people and voluntary, community and faith organisations together in enabling change, we build on the assets in our diverse local communities which can reduce loneliness and social isolation, increase community resilience and support people to manage their health. This approach helps makes the shift away from 'what's the matter with you?' to 'what matters to you?'

16. Evidence from health, care and other sectors shows that most large scale change initiatives fail to deliver their goals at the scale and in the time sought. This is particularly true of complex change initiatives that cross organisational boundaries and involve multiple sectors. Failure to spread is rarely due to the content or structure of the plans that are put into action. Rather, it is much more likely to be that the changes do not connect and engage with people. As a result, the change is often perceived as 'must do' (imposed) rather than 'want to do' by stakeholders.
17. There are numerous change management tools and approaches that can assist us with our change efforts. This publication brings together many of the most widely used tried and tested tools and approaches as well as new tools and concepts, linking their relevance to the Change Model. The evidence base on large scale change suggests that the kinds of approaches set out in this guide could make a fundamental difference in helping people achieve their goals and aspirations for radical change. Included in this guide are the following tools and approaches:
  - Planning questions for large scale change
  - Theories of change, logic models and driver diagrams
  - Managing complex dilemmas
  - Measuring large scale change
  - Continuum of commitment analysis
  - Systems and stakeholders analysis.
  - 30, 60, 90-day cycles of change
  - Plan, do, study, act
18. The literature on improvement in the health sector suggests that organisations or teams that adopt a specific methodology tend to get better outcomes. However, there is no evidence that one methodology or approach gets better results than any other. The key seems to be the importance of having a methodology as a guiding approach. If there is one lesson we take from the evidence base on large scale change, it is the importance of context - a change methodology that delivers outstanding results in one health and care context may deliver little in another setting where the conditions for change are not so healthy.
19. Every local context for change is unique and some aspects of this guide will be more relevant (and will appeal) more than others. It is the aim of the leaders and change agents who helped co-create this guide that *Leading Large Scale Change* will help you create a different tomorrow; one that builds on the strengths and proud history of the NHS and wider health and care system but that really meets the needs and desires of each individual and the whole population in a rapidly changing world.

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