

Research and Audit

Getting evidence into practice

The effective practitioner is constantly trying to improve service and care. This frequently involves research and audit projects. This will typically include a project plan and an implementation plan that includes the necessary resources and a strategy for evaluation.

The model for improvement is used frequently within healthcare. Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles providing a quick and effective way to generate evidence and measure impact. You should consider how to write up and share local initiatives. The information here may help support you with this.

What does this mean for the Effective Practitioner?

The Effective Practitioner needs good report writing skills in order to write up a project succinctly, highlighting the techniques used, findings and recommendations for practice improvement. Consideration should also be given to disseminating results to others thus presentation skills are also important at this stage. The Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals may also want to include others to help rollout, evaluate and refine through audit any practice improvements so that they become fully embedded in your service.



Learning Activities



Writing up your project

Having conducted or taken part in a project (audit, evaluation, research, or service improvement) you should write up your report, communicate your findings and plan how they might be implemented in order to improve practice. Regardless of how large or small your research activity has been, the presentation of your report should follow the same pattern.

Click here to get some guidance on how to write a report.

Use the following sections as a guide for your report:

- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Introduction to the study

- Literature review
- Approach
 - Description and rationale for the selection of the approach (qualitative, quantitative or action research)
 - Aims and Objectives of the project
 - Time period and methods used e.g. interviews, questionnaire.
 - Target audience and sample size
 - Ethical considerations
 - Project Plan: the stages, deliverables and timeline
 - Quality control measures
- Data Analysis: what tools you used e.g. SPSS, thematic analysis, and a clear and concise summary of the data collected, using pictorial presentation if relevant.
- Findings and Limitations: A description of the outcomes of the data analysis and lessons learnt in the project.
- Recommendations: based on the findings, the recommendations for practice improvement.
- References: a list of all sources.
- Appendices: supplementary documents e.g. permission letters, ethical consent forms, participant cover letters etc.
- Review and discuss your project findings with your colleagues and line manager and identify if your project could contribute to your local organisation's guideline or policy.
- Consider presenting your findings at a team meeting, in local bulletins, networks and social learning tools relevant to your area of practice.

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.

KSF Core Dimensions: Personal and People Development.

Notes



Improving practice

Your project, whether it is audit, service improvement, evaluation, or a research activity may include a number of quality improvement recommendations. It's important to put a plan in place to implement agreed recommendations and reflect and evaluate the improvements to ensure you continually improve your practice.

- Meet with your line manager and present and discuss your findings/recommendations.
- Agree an implementation plan for the recommendations in your report. This may include presenting your findings and implementation plans at a team/multidisciplinary team meeting.
- Based on feedback from your line manager/team colleagues, design an implementation schedule and [communications and engagement plan](#) based on timelines and resources available.
- You might want to use the [PDSA cycle](#) to help trial your service improvement:
 - Plan - the change to be tested or implemented
 - Do - carry out the test or change
 - Study - data before and after the change and reflect on what was learned
 - Act - plan the next change cycle or full implementation
- Identify your 'early adopters' – people you can work with first to implement your improvement recommendations.
- Identify and mitigate against any barriers to change that you envisage or encounter when rolling out your initiative (or undertaking the Do in the PDSA cycle).
- Solicit and negotiate co-operation from whomever you need to help you e.g. team colleagues.
- Gather data on your initiative and share positive news stories with others in order to maintain momentum.
- Seeks views from others, listening to their feedback and priorities – which may be different from yours.
- Include a [strategy for evaluation](#) in your implementation schedule.
- Based on your evaluation, review your service/quality improvement, discuss the revised version of your service/quality improvement with your line manager /colleagues and agree adjustments.
- Re-negotiate a schedule for audit and evaluation.

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.

KSF Core Dimensions: Service Improvement, Quality

Notes



Sharing and celebrating practice improvement

Your project whether it is an audit, evaluation, service improvement or research may include a number of quality improvement recommendations that can be shared and celebrated across your service and outside your service.

- Consider [creating a case study](#) of your project. If you created a project plan you should be able to reuse elements of the plan in the early part of your case study. Publish the case study on local discussion boards and newsletters.
- Discuss the possibility of presenting your work at an academic conference, as a paper or poster presentation or publishing your work in a professional journal with your practice development or practice education leads.
- Reflect on your personal learning from the experience of doing a research project and share with colleagues. Consider convening an [After Action Review](#) where you can share the project and lessons learnt.
Sharing your findings and your learner journey will assist others in developing research awareness and an appreciation of the relevance of evidence-based practice. Find out if your findings could be used to generate or update guidelines/protocols in your practice area.
- Discuss plans and strategies for maintaining evidence-based practice in your clinical area. These should include ongoing evaluation and the potential for future projects.

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.

KSF Core Dimensions: Quality, Communication

Find more work-based learning activities on the effective practitioner website
at www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk

Notes