

# Improvement Cymru Academy Toolkit Guide



## Spread and Scale

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## Introduction

Spread and scale is a part of implementation science. 'Spread' is when you replicate an intervention that has been used elsewhere. This could be newly tested ways of working in other settings e.g. other wards, units, hospitals, testing ideas in a different system. 'Scale' is a subset of spread that involves building an infrastructure (finances, staffing, equipment etc...) to support implementation at full-scale. A British Medical Journal article titled Spreading and Scaling up Innovation and Improvement (*Greenhalgh and Apoutsi, 2019*) described spread as replicating an initiative somewhere else and scaling-up as building infrastructure to support full scale implementation. East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) also defines spread and scale in their article 'Scale up and Spread' (*East London Foundation Trust, No date*). They describe 'spread' as 'when best practice is disseminated consistently and reliably across a whole system and involves the implementation of proven interventions in each applicable care setting.' Whereas their definition of 'scaling up' is 'the process by which new working methods are tested by an increased number of teams to increase degree of belief they work, overcoming infrastructure issues that arise.'

## Rationale

Spread and scaling ideas is important because it can fill gaps in our knowledge about what works best. It can improve staff job satisfaction and staff retention because new initiatives may increase efficiency, reduce waste, and allows us to work collaboratively with other colleagues. Spreading ideas of best practise can initiate an innovative and learning environment for staff.

## When to use Spread and Scale

Spreading and scaling ideas takes place after you have undertaken your Quality Improvement (QI) project and have run several successful plan, do, study and act (PDSA) cycles which have demonstrated that the change intervention has resulted in improvement. You will need to ensure that you can convey the changes in a simplified and tested way. Any relevant documentation that can support the work you have undertaken needs to be gathered. This will include items such as driver

diagrams, measures, data, PDSA documentation and policies and procedures to support implementation.

## How to use Spread and Scale

Scaling and spreading innovation is hard. Achieving successful change takes a lot of work, usually takes up more resources (staff training, cost, time etc...) and requires a shift in culture. It is important to note that an idea that may work in one area may not work in other because of the different context it may be spreading to. There could be a lack of resources, social factors, or psychological factors of different patient groups. This may require staff to adapt or change the innovation slightly and tailor it towards their department leading to further learning and collaboration. There are several well-established frameworks from the Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI) (*Massoud et al, 2006*), NHS Scotland (*Healthcare Improvement Scotland, 2013*) and NHS institute of Innovation and Improvement (*NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, 2012*) that you can draw upon to help scale and spread your change ideas and spread into wider settings. Healthcare Improvement Scotland Spread and Sustainability framework was developed in 2013. It draws upon existing resources (including the frameworks above) and presents the framework in a more detailed way. Because the framework draws upon other frameworks already described, there are many similarities however the documentation describes the framework in more detail than the others. There are five elements of the framework; Innovation, spread, decision to adopt, implementation and sustainability. The first element of innovation has been added to the framework. The later four elements draw upon current frameworks as described above and provides a more detailed description of what is expected when spreading an improvement. Drawing on these frameworks, the steps for scale and spread are outlined in this section below.

### **Step 1: The Improvement Project**

It is important to consider your improvement project. You should have detailed documentation of your important project so others can learn and follow the process you undertook. There are characteristics to consider before spreading your change ideas: how clear the advantages or benefits are, how simple is the change, how easily can it be implemented, how easily can potential adopters observe the change,

how easily could the change be modified to suit the needs of different context (characteristics of the patient, providers, organisations, and treatments). Other characteristics refer to task relevance, task usefulness, feasibility, how easy is it to implement, and how much knowledge do you need to carry out the change idea. This element is important because you must consider all these aspects of your improvement project before you start to spread your idea into other areas.

## **Step 2: Planning spread**

There are several different frameworks that discuss laying the foundations for spread early on in your improvement project. You should also consider creating a spread team and liaising with leadership teams and individuals who have knowledge of the environment or service. The leadership teams will be crucial in communicating that the improvement project is a key strategic initiative of the organisation and support communication for others to understand the reasons for the initiative, raise awareness of improvements at the successful sites and learn how they could contribute to that effort. A communication plan is key and should raise awareness of your improvement project in way that will make stakeholders want to adopt your change ideas. Healthcare Improvement Scotland Spread and Sustainability framework takes a closer the types of pressures that will help spread your improvement. This could be through pressures from patients and the public for better services, peer influence, transparency, collaboratively working together or there could be central requirements and support needed such as guidance and to develop skills. You need to ensure that you send a clear message to those who you want to hear it, establish a spread team, and appoint a leader and you need to share the results of your successful plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycles as much as you can.

## **Step 3: Establishing an Aim**

Developing an aim is an important outcome of the initial spread planning process. A spread aim should address the 'who, what, and where' of spread and should include the population that is the target of spread, specific goals that are expected to be achieved, specific improvement for the target population, and the time frame for the effort. A spread aim is the foundation of the plan.

## **Step 4: Adoption of Spread**

The Model of Diffusion (*Rogers, 1995*) has been in development since 2004 and uses the current literature and benchmarking from over 30 leading healthcare organisations to understand the challenges of diffusing innovation and barriers to spreading good practise. It is used to understand the different types of individuals involved in the change process – early adopters, adopters, innovators, early majority, late minority, and laggards. Although innovators will be keen to take up improvement ideas and implement them, it is recommended that you focus on the early adopters as because they will be more likely to implement changes and sustain them whereas the innovators will quickly implement change ideas, but they may not be sustainable if another innovation comes along. Identify people in your organisation that are motivated and capable of adopting and implementing successful changes. Organisational culture is important to consider when planning your spread activities as this can influence adoption.

As well as assessing the adoption of your change ideas in terms of people adoption, you also need to consider the systems readiness to adopt. The NHS institute for Innovation and Improvement (*NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, 2012*) developed a spread and adoption tool to assess the readiness of your system based on three factors: people, context, and innovation. People factors focus on leadership, culture and motivation, context focuses on how suitable the adoption of the change would be, in the context of other healthcare settings (population of the patient, providers, organisations, and treatments), innovation focusses on the characteristics of the change as outlined in the Healthcare Improvement Scotland Spread and Sustainability framework.

## **Step 5: Implementation**

The Healthcare Improvement Scotland Spread and Sustainability Framework and the NHS institute of Improvement and Innovation spread, and adoption framework have emphasised the importance of the assessing the context where the innovation is being spread. It is vitally important to document in detail the process of the initial innovation during the initial improvement phase and draw upon the characteristics of the change, as discussed by the Healthcare Improvement Scotland Spread and

Sustainability framework in step one. Whilst an innovation will be useful for another area of healthcare, it is important to note that some innovations will need to be adapted because of different context, such as population of the patient, providers, organisations, resources available etc. The documentation of the initial process and innovation will allow other areas of healthcare to learn, test, and refine the innovation using PDSA cycles to adapt the initial innovation if needed. It is also important to document the process of improvement at the site the innovation is being spread to so that additional learning, can be utilised so ideas can be spread to other areas.

### Step 6: Sustainability

Sustainability should be thought about throughout all the steps of spreading an innovation. The sustainability of innovation is a common challenge in improvement projects. The NHS Institute of Improvement and Innovation (*Maier, Gustafson and Evans, 2010*) have developed a sustainability tool to help evaluate how sustainable the changes you have made are. It comprised of three themes which are divided into categories as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Themes and categories from the sustainability model

Themes	Categories
<b>Staff</b>	Training and involvement
	Behaviours
	Senior Leaders
	Clinical Leaders
<b>Process</b>	Monitoring the process
	Adaptability
	Credibility of benefits

	Benefits beyond helping patients
<b>Organisation</b>	Infrastructure
	Fit with organisational goals and culture

This tool can assist you in assessing the sustainability of your improvements and areas that need to be addressed, to ensure yours and the teams hard work can be sustained. Process and organisation are key elements for sustainability. Building high-reliable processes will ensure that you mitigate against human factors (see other toolkit guides) and build sustainability, you will need to have the appropriate infrastructure in place as well as ad positive culture. The IHI framework and the Healthcare Improvement Scotland Spread and Sustainability framework both highlight evaluation as an important aspect of sustainability. A measurement system such as auditing can help monitor the sustainability of the innovation by identifying if there is any deviance from the system in place. You will be able to identify areas that you need to work on to make the innovation more sustainable. As the innovation becomes embedded in daily practise, you may decide to alter the frequency you monitor your system.

### What's next?

Think about the improvement projects that you are or have undertaken and ask yourself were they successful, and do you think they would benefit other areas of healthcare? If so, then why not showcase and talk about your improvement project at every opportunity. You could tell other colleagues when at meetings, place your work in your organisations staff forum, put in on display within your ward or department so other colleagues can see, or even publish it in a journal so others can see your work. Utilise the scale and spread frameworks to successfully scale and spread your improvement project.

### Helpful tips

The Health Foundation created a top tips guide for spreading good practises:

1. Get a range of people involved in both implementation and dissemination of ideas, including clinical and managerial leaders.
2. View people as active change agents, not passive recipients.
3. Emphasise how initiatives address people's priorities.
4. Target messages differently for different audiences.
5. Provide support and training to help people understand and implement change.
6. Plan dissemination strategies from the outset.
7. Dedicate time for spread and scale.
8. Dedicate funds for spread and scale.
9. Make use of a wide range of approaches such as social media, opinion leaders and existing professional networks.
10. Evaluate the success of innovations and improvements, but also the extent of uptake and dissemination within teams, organisations and more broadly.  
Things that are measured tend to get more emphasis, so measuring may help to ensure that it's a priority.

### Additional resources

<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/improvement-cymru-academy/> or email us at [improvementcymruacademy@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:improvementcymruacademy@wales.nhs.uk) to find out about the improvement courses we offer.

### Further reading

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Maher, L., Gustafson, D., Evans, A. (2010). Sustainability: Model and Guide.

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Spread and Scale (No date). East London NHS Foundation Trust. Available at: <https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/collection/scale-up-and-spread/> (Accessed 12 Sep 23)

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