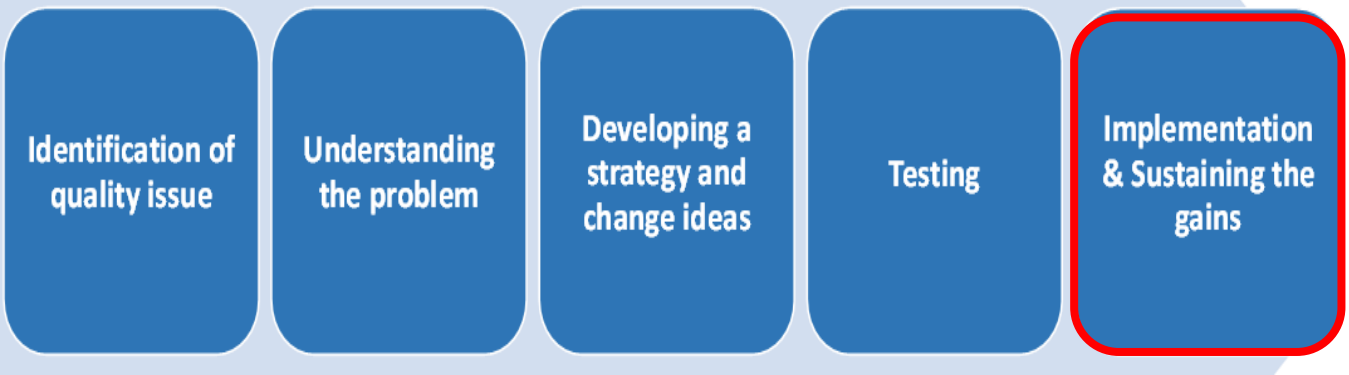
Implementing your Quality Improvement (QI) project, and setting up a Quality Control (QC) system: A summary guide

If you are seeing successful and sustained improvement* from your tested change ideas, then this is the right document for you. An implementation plan and quality control system are two key things that you will need.

***Our operational definition of sustained improvement** is as follows:

Run charts should show a minimum of a shift plus 3 data points at the new performance level.

Control charts should show a minimum of a shift plus 4 data points at the new performance level.



ELFT's approach to quality improvement

Implementation is about embedding the successful change ideas, tested during your quality improvement (QI) project, into your team's daily operations, so that they become an integral part of the system. This is what we commonly refer to as making the new way of working 'business as usual'.

Why is it important to carry out implementation?

So that your team's improvement efforts are not lost! By having a robust implementation plan, it will help to ensure that changes remain long lasting.

At what point does the QI project close?

You should close your quality improvement project when you have seen sustained improvement of your performance level, and have implemented the successful change ideas. You are then ready to move the new performance level of the project into quality control.

Use the **'6 steps to effective implementation checklist'** on **page 3** to help your team to create a robust implementation plan. **Start using the checklist as soon as your team have tested a successful change idea that has led to an improvement.**

Quality Control

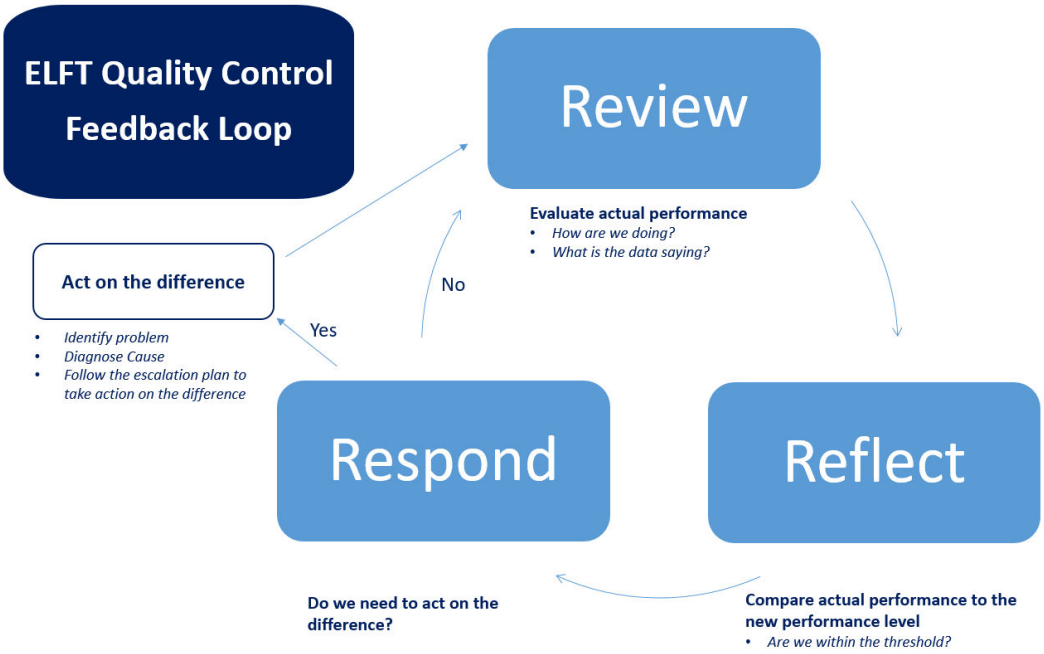
What is a Quality Control system?

Quality Control (QC) allows us to monitor and manage performance of a system in real time. It differs from quality assurance (QA) as assurance looks at performance at a snapshot in time, often comparing against a standard, whereas quality control provides a way to monitor performance over time, and being able to respond to deteriorations in real-time.

Why is it important to set up a Quality Control system?

So that you have a system that you/your team/service can continue to monitor the new agreed performance level achieved, and detect any deterioration in performance over time.

An effective feedback loop can help teams to create stable, predictable environments that are responsive to any instability such as increases in variation. At ELFT, we have designed a feedback loop that supports team to review, reflect and respond to any differences between the current actual performance and the new agreed performance level.

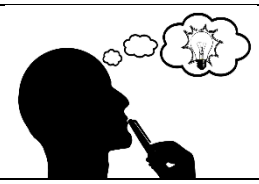


Use the **'3 steps to setting up a Quality System Checklist'** on **page 6** to help your team to create a robust and reliable QC system.

6 steps to effective implementation

Implementation is about embedding the successful change ideas that have been tested during your quality improvement (QI) project, into your team's daily operations. This is what we commonly refer to as making the new way of working 'business as usual'.

Use this 6 steps checklist to create a robust implementation plan to help your team maintain the new improved level of performance.



Successful change ideas tested

Before starting the checklist, list out all the successful change ideas tested in your QI project:

Step 1 — Standardisation

Tick if completed ☐

Standardise the way that these successful change ideas will be carried out by the team going forward. Use the 'standard work' template below to guide you.

List out the all the processes/jobs/ tasks that are necessary in order to maintain the improvement seen (e.g new performance level). Then standardise by assigning the agreed roles and responsibilities, and frequency to it, so it is clear to everyone of what it is expected of them. See the example below for how you might start to complete this template.

The QI project was to improve the reception area within a service, and one of the successful change ideas was to provide water to service users to improve their waiting experience:

Tasks	Who	Frequency (daily/weekly/monthly/when required)	Tools required
e.g. Filling water jugs	*OT*	*Twice Daily including weekends*	*Water jugs*

Step 2

Documentation

Tick if completed

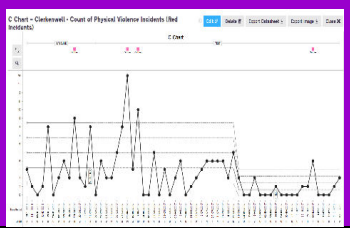
Where will you document the standard work above so that the standard processes becomes '*business as usual*' for your team or service? Example of places to document:

- Department's/ ward's standard operating procedures
- Employee's handbook
- Service policies
- Job descriptions
- Others, please list below:

☐

How often will you review the documentation to ensure standard work is being adhered or needs updating?

☐



What will your team continue to measure during implementation to monitor not only the new performance level but also whether the standard work is being carried out? Please list below:

☐

How often will you measure the above? (weekly/monthly)

☐

Step 4

Staff education/ training / induction / support processes

Tick if completed

How are the new ways of working (outlined in your standardisation and documentation in steps 1 and 2 above), being integrated into your staff education, induction and development training so they are clear as to the who, how and why of the change?

- Have you incorporated training modules for new staff so that they understand the new processes as they join the team? (i.e at ward induction, service induction or Trust induction) ☐
- In your training content, do you explain the why of the change? ☐
- Have you incorporated training tasks in the standard work document (i.e. who does the inductions)? ☐
- During 1:1 supervision with staff? ☐

Step 5	Managing Resource Implications	Tick if completed
Have you discussed with your sponsor if there any resource implications associated with the new ways of working developed through this project (e.g. do you need funding for any resources?) • If so, have you established how these will be met and agreed with senior managers if necessary?		☐

Step 6	The Social Dimension of Change	Tick if completed
Have you taken action to support the engagement and leadership of this work across the whole team? • How will you be communicating with the whole team that you are about to implement this set of change ideas? • What forums could you use to keep an eye on the work, as a whole team? • How would you re-engage the team if the new performance level deteriorates, and staff revert back to the old ways of working?		☐ ☐ ☐

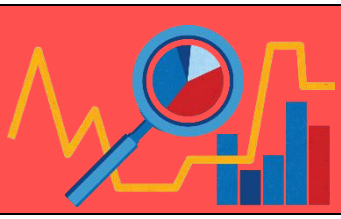
Action Plan

For any of the gaps identified above, please note the actions plan here:

3 steps to setting up a Quality Control system

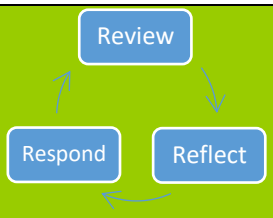
Quality Control (QC) enables a team to monitor and manage performance in real time.

Setting up a QC system after your QI project will allow you to keep an eye on your new level of performance regularly. **Use this checklist to help set up a robust QC system for your quality improvement (QI) project.**

Step 1	Pre-requisites for Quality Control 	Tick if completed
Before we can enter into quality control, the following needs to be discussed, decided and agreed with your project team, and QI Sponsor. If you are unsure with any of the following items, please ask your QI Coach or Improvement Advisor for their support.		
• What will you continue to measure in the quality control phase to monitor the new performance level achieved through your QI project?		☐
• Have you clearly established the new and agreed performance level from your QI project?		☐
• Is the new and agreed performance level stable ie showing common cause variation?		☐
• Have you agreed the threshold level at which your team will take action (respond) if there is any special cause variation or deterioration of the new and agreed performance level?		☐
• Have the team decided on how they will respond when the threshold agreed above is met?		☐
If you are using control charts to measure your data over time, it could be useful to use the control limits on your charts to decide on your threshold. Your QI coach and/or Improvement Advisor can help you if you require assistance with this.		

Step 2

Setting up the ELFT Quality Control Feedback Loop



Tick if completed

The ELFT QC Feedback Loop (Review, Reflect and Respond) provides a simple and straightforward framework to help us to monitor and visualise performance as part of our day to day operations on the ward/service. Step 3 explains how to use the framework in practice. Before using it, you will also need to discuss, decide and agree on the following with your whole team (ward/service), and ward manager.

Review

- How frequently will you review the data you agreed to continue to measure in step 1? Please specify the date, time, and location below: ☐
- Who will need to be at this review? Please specify below: ☐
- Who will bring the data and make it visible to all the team? Please specify below: ☐

Reflect

- With the agreed threshold in step 1, have you communicated this with the whole team e.g ward/service? If not, please specify below your communication plan: ☐

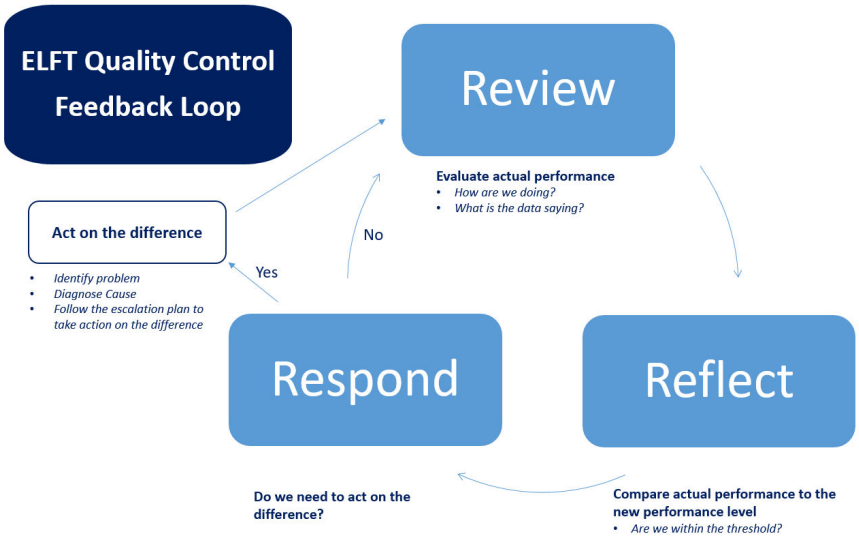
Respond

- For the observed difference in performance level e.g comparing your current actual performance from the data, and it falls outside of the agreed threshold set in step 1, what would be the team's escalation plan (set of actions) that should be put in place imminently to bring performance back into 'control'. Please list them below: ☐
- Have you communicated the escalation plan to your team? If not, please specify below your communication plan: ☐

Step 3

Using the ELFT Quality Control Feedback Loop

Tick if completed



With the people and frequency agreed in step 2:

Review your data, and evaluate current actual performance. ☐

Reflect and compare whether your current actual performance fits within the acceptable threshold for your new agreed performance level defined in step 1 of this checklist. ☐

Respond by assessing whether you need to take action on the difference of your performance level. ☐

If it is 'No' action required, this means current performance is within acceptable threshold, then the QC feedback loop is completed until the next review.

If it is 'Yes' where an action is required, this means that the current performance is not within the acceptable threshold, identify 'why' this might be the case, follow the escalation plan laid out in step 2 of this checklist, and carry out the remedial actions with immediacy.

For better visualisation of the above processes, we recommend using a visual management board, and huddling around as you use the feedback loop.