

## Tool 3 – Implementation Enablers and Barriers: Assessment Tool

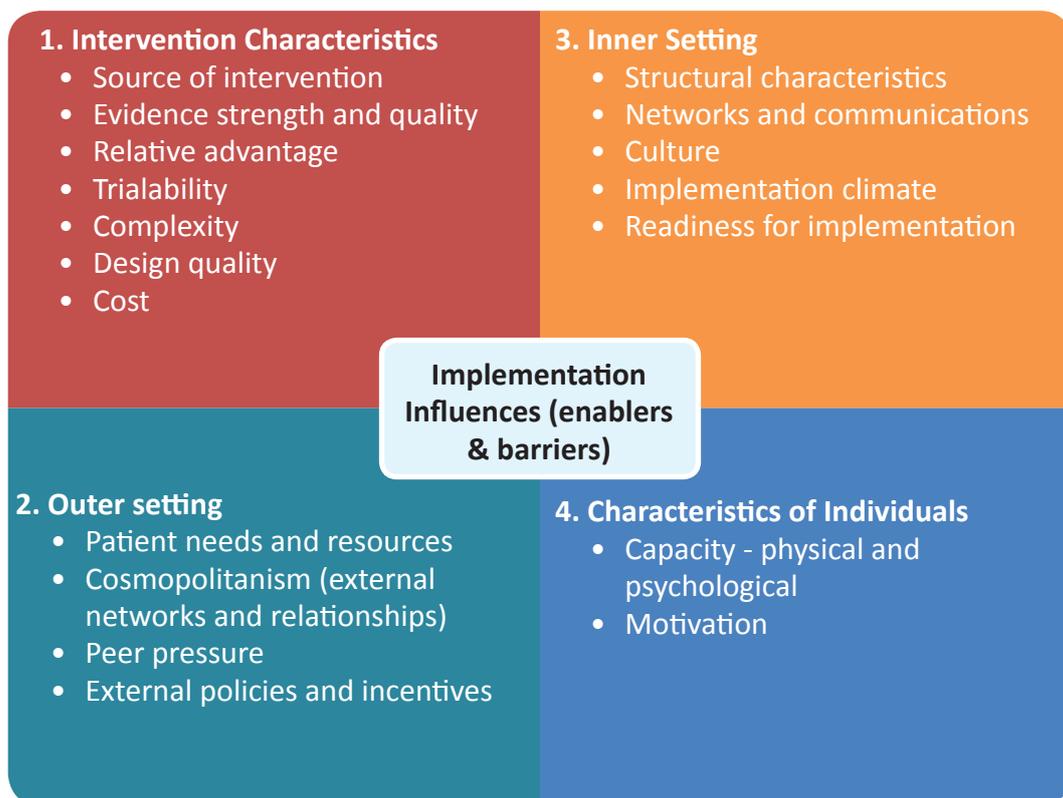
### Introduction to the Implementation Enablers and Barriers Assessment Tool

A wide range of factors influence whether implementation is successful. Assessing and understanding these factors can help to identify barriers and facilitators to change and inform implementation planning. This assessment tool provides an overview of key factors that influence implementation and assists people in assessing these. It also helps with identifying opportunities to strengthen implementation.

The factors influencing implementation are organised around the four areas presented in the graphic:

This tool builds on two theoretical frameworks:

- The **Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)** (Damschroder *et al.*, 2009)<sup>[1]</sup> and
- The **Behaviour Change Wheel** (Michie *et al.*, 2011)<sup>[2]</sup>.



This tool can be completed for **individual recommendations** within National Clinical Guidelines, or for a **guideline/project as a whole**. It can also be used to assess enablers and barriers at **various levels**, such as at a national level or in a particular healthcare setting.

In completing this tool, you should focus on factors that are **most relevant and salient** to your guideline and its stage of implementation. For example, you may wish to focus on factors that will be most fruitful to address. We recommend that you choose between five to seven factors to assess and at least one factor from each of the four areas. Use the table below to select the factors you are focusing on by ticking (✓) in the relevant boxes

FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION	Tick (✓)
<b>1. Intervention characteristics</b>	
a) Intervention source	
b) Evidence strength and quality	
c) Relative advantage	
d) Trialability	
e) Complexity	
f) Design quality	
g) Cost	
<b>2. Outer setting</b>	
a) Patient needs and resources	
b) Cosmopolitanism (networks and relationships)	
c) Peer pressure	
d) External policies and incentives	
<b>3. Inner Setting</b>	
a) Structural characteristics	
b) Networks and communications	
c) Culture	
d) Implementation climate	
e) Readiness for Implementation	
<b>4. Characteristics of Individuals</b>	
a) Capacity - physical and psychological	
b) Motivation	

## 1. INTERVENTION CHARACTERISTICS

An intervention is defined as any *change* to policy or practice. It could refer to a National Clinical Guideline and/or individual recommendations within them. A range of intervention attributes can influence the success of implementation.

### A) INTERVENTION SOURCE

*The perceived legitimacy and credibility of the source (e.g. academic college, HSE clinical programme or advocacy group) of the intervention, including whether the intervention is developed externally or internally.*

**If this is an existing intervention, who developed it; who is the sponsor; who is responsible for update and implementation?**

**To what extent is the intervention considered to be appropriate?**

*(tick response)*

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this? (If unsure, what additional information do you need?)**

<p><b>B) EVIDENCE STRENGTH AND QUALITY</b>  <i>The quality and validity of the evidence indicating that the intervention will have the desired outcomes.</i></p>		
<p><b>What supporting evidence shows the intervention will work?</b></p>	<p><b>How do stakeholders perceive the strength of the evidence base for the intervention?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>
<p><b>C) RELATIVE ADVANTAGE</b>  <i>The advantage of implementing the intervention versus an alternative solution.</i></p>		
<p><b>What advantages does the intervention have compared to alternatives?</b></p>	<p><b>To what extent is the intervention considered to be better than current and/or alternative practices?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>

<p><b>D) TRIALABILITY</b>  <i>The ability to test the intervention on a small scale in a setting, and to be able to reverse course (undo implementation) if warranted.</i></p>		
<p><b>Has the intervention been piloted or are there plans to pilot the intervention prior to full-scale implementation?</b></p>	<p><b>To what extent is it possible to trial/pilot the intervention prior to full-scale implementation?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>
<p><b>E) COMPLEXITY</b>  <i>The complexity of the intervention, reflected by duration, scope, radicalness, disruptiveness, centrality, and intricacy and number of steps required to implement.</i></p>		
<p><b>How complicated is the intervention?</b></p>	<p><b>What is the level of change required to implement the intervention and replace existing practices?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>

<p><b>F) DESIGN QUALITY AND PACKAGING</b>  <i>Quality of the materials and supports available to help implement and use the intervention.</i></p>		
<p><b>What resources, tools and supports are available to help implement and use the intervention?</b></p>	<p><b>How do you rate the quality of the resources developed to support implementation of the intervention?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>
<p><b>G) COST</b>  <i>Costs of the intervention and costs associated with implementing the intervention including investment, supply, and opportunity costs.</i></p>		
<p><b>What categories of costs will be incurred in implementing the intervention? (e.g. staffing, equipment, IT)</b></p>	<p><b>What level of costs will be incurred in implementing the intervention?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>

## 2. OUTER SETTING

The wider economic, political, social and cultural context influences implementation.

### A) PATIENT/CLIENT NEEDS AND RESOURCES

*The extent to which patient needs, as well as barriers and facilitators to meet those needs, are accurately known and prioritised.*

How were the needs and preferences of patients/clients considered when deciding to implement the intervention?

**To what extent will the intervention meet the needs and preferences of patients/clients?**  
(tick response)

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this?** (If unsure, what additional information do you need?)

### B) COSMOPOLITANISM (EXTERNAL NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS)

*The quality and extent of relationships and networks with other external organisations (social capital).*

What kind of information exchange/networking do staff have with others outside their setting?

**What is the level of information exchange/networking staff have with others outside of their setting/organisation?**  
(tick response)

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this?** (If unsure, what additional information do you need?)

<p><b>C) PEER PRESSURE</b>  <i>Competitive pressure to implement an intervention, mainly from other professionals/services/organisations who have already implemented the intervention. This can aid adoption of interventions.</i></p>		
<p>Are other services/professionals implementing the intervention or similar practices?</p>	<p><b>To what extent are other services/professionals implementing the intervention?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low</li> </ul>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>
<p><b>D) EXTERNAL POLICIES AND INCENTIVES</b>  <i>External policies and incentives that spread interventions, including government policy and regulations, external mandates, recommendations and guidelines, collaboratives, and public or benchmark reporting.</i></p>		
<p>Are there external policies, regulations or guidelines which could impede or conflict with implementation of the intervention?</p>	<p><b>To what extent are external policies and incentives supporting the implementation of the intervention?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low</li> </ul>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this?</b> <i>(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</i></p>

### 3. INNER SETTING

The organisational structure, culture and climate play an important role in successful implementation.

#### A) STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

*The age and size of the organisation, level of staff turnover, geographic spread, physical layout etc.*

**What kind of infrastructure changes are needed to accommodate the intervention (e.g. changes to policies, information and record systems)?**

**To what extent is the level of infrastructure required to implement the intervention in place?**  
*(tick response)*

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this?** *(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)*

#### B) NETWORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

*The nature and quality of social networks, and formal and informal communications within an organisation.*

**How do staff find out about new initiatives, accomplishments, best practice etc.?**

**How do you rate the quality of communication in the organisation?**  
*(tick response)*

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this?** *(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)*

<p><b>C) CULTURE</b>  <i>Norms, values, and basic assumptions of an organisation.</i></p>		
<p><b>How do you think the organisation's culture will affect the implementation of the intervention?</b></p>	<p><b>To what extent are new ideas embraced and used to make improvements?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low</li> </ul>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this? (If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</b></p>
<p><b>D) IMPLEMENTATION CLIMATE</b>  <i>The absorptive capacity for change, shared receptivity of involved individuals to an intervention, and the extent to which use of that intervention will be rewarded, supported, and expected within their organisation.</i></p>		
<p><b>How well does the intervention fit with existing work processes and practices?</b></p>	<p><b>To what extent is the organisation receptive to implementing the intervention?</b>  <i>(tick response)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low</li> </ul>	<p><b>What are the next steps for strengthening this? (If unsure, what additional information do you need?)</b></p>

**E) READINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION – Leadership engagement; available resources; access to knowledge and information**

*Tangible and immediate indicators of organisational commitment to its decision to implement an intervention. It involves:*

*i) leadership engagement, i.e. commitment, involvement and accountability of leaders;*

*ii) available resources, i.e. resources dedicated to implementation (e.g. for training); and*

*iii) access to knowledge and information, i.e. access to information and knowledge about how to implement the intervention.*

**Do you have the necessary resources and supports required to implement the intervention?**

**To what extent does the organisation endorse or support implementation of the intervention?**

*(tick response)*

High

Medium

Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this? (If unsure, what additional information do you need?)**

#### 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS

The characteristics of individuals, including their capacity and motivation, influence changes in behaviour required to implement interventions.

##### A) CAPACITY – PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL

*The physical and psychological capacity of individuals to deliver the intervention, including physical strength, knowledge, skills and stamina.*

**Who (i.e. what groups) are needed to deliver the intervention?**

**To what extent do individuals have the capacity (physical and psychological) to enact the changes required?**  
*(tick response)*

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this?** *(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)*

##### B) MOTIVATION

*Brain processes that energise and direct behaviour, including knowledge, beliefs, and confidence.*

**How do individuals feel about implementing the intervention?**

**To what extent are staff motivated to enact the changes required?**  
*(tick response)*

- High
- Medium
- Low

**What are the next steps for strengthening this?** *(If unsure, what additional information do you need?)*

## Guidance and Definitions for Implementation Enablers and Barriers Assessment Tool

### 1. Intervention Characteristics

*The characteristics of the intervention being implemented.*

<b>Intervention source</b>	Legitimacy and credibility of the intervention source
<b>Evidence strength and quality</b>	Quality and validity of the evidence indicating that the intervention will achieve desired outcomes
<b>Relative advantage</b>	Intervention has more advantage than another alternative
<b>Trialability</b>	Ability to test the intervention on a small scale in the organisation and to be able to reverse course (undo implementation) if warranted
<b>Complexity</b>	Difficulty of implementation, reflected by duration, scope, radicalness, disruptiveness, centrality, number of steps required to implement
<b>Design quality and packaging</b>	Excellence in how the intervention is bundled, presented and assembled, including what online supports are available
<b>Cost</b>	Costs of the intervention itself and costs associated with implementing the intervention, including investment, supply and opportunity costs

### 2. Outer Setting

*The economic, political, social and cultural context within which an organisation resides.*

<b>Patient needs and resources</b>	Extent to which patient needs, as well as barriers and facilitators to meet those needs, are accurately known and prioritised
<b>Cosmopolitanism</b>	The quality and extent of relationships and networks with other external organisations (social capital)
<b>Peer pressure</b>	Competitive pressure to implement an intervention, mainly from outside professionals/services/organisations who have already implemented the intervention
<b>External policies and incentives</b>	External strategies to spread interventions, including policy and regulations, external mandates, recommendations and guidelines, collaboratives, public or benchmarking reporting

### 3. Inner Setting

*Structural, political and cultural context through which an implementation process will proceed*

<b>Structural characteristics</b>	Social architecture, age, maturity, size, staff turnover of an organisation
<b>Networks and communications</b>	Nature and quality of social networks, and formal and informal communications within an organisation (e.g. teamwork)
<b>Culture</b>	Norms, values and basic assumptions of an organisation

<b>Implementation climate</b>	Tension [perceived need] for change Compatibility – innovation fit with existing systems Relative priority within the organisation Organisational incentives and rewards Goals communicated, and feedback taken Learning climate of trying new methods, reflecting, learning
<b>Readiness for implementation</b>	Leadership engagement Available resources for implementation Access to information and knowledge about how to implement the intervention
<b>4. Characteristics of Individuals</b> <i>Knowledge, beliefs and skills that individuals need in order to carry out the implementation process. May also refer to a team or unit</i>	
<b>Knowledge and beliefs about the intervention</b>	Individual beliefs that the intervention will be successful in their setting, given existing evidence and plans
<b>Self-efficacy</b>	Individual belief in their own, and their colleagues', ability to implement the innovation
<b>Individual stage of change</b>	The phase an individual is in, according to Rogers'/Prochaska's Stages of Change, they progress towards skilled, enthusiastic and sustained use of the intervention
<b>Individual identification with organisation</b>	How individuals perceive the organisation, their relationship with it and the degree of commitment to the organisation
<b>Other personal attributes</b>	Including tolerance of ambiguity, intellectual ability, motivation, values, competence, and learning style

## References

- [1] Damschroder, L. J., Aron, D. C., Keith, R. E., Kirsh, S. R., Alexander, J. A., & Lowery, J. C. (2009). Fostering implementation of health services research findings into practice: a consolidated framework for advancing implementation science. *Implementation Science*, 4(1), pp. 50-64. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-4-50>
- [2] Michie, S., van Stralan M., West R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6(1), p.42. Available from: <https://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42>