

# Transformational Change Summary

## Definition

There are varying definitions of transformation and frameworks for how transformation should be implemented. The following definition has been taken for a healthcare perspective for the purposes of this summary:

“Transformation is a deliberate, planned process that sets out a high aspiration to make dramatic and irreversible changes to how care is delivered, what staff do (and how they behave) and the role of patients, that results in substantial, measurable improvement in outcomes, patient and staff satisfaction and financial sustainability”

## Method

A purposeful approach to identifying literature for inclusion in this summary was taken, including the use of electronic searching of Google Scholar and PubMed. Key papers were selected that have examined successful cases of transformational change in sufficient-depth for review and a very rapid synthesis was conducted of the common features and principles across these.

## What we found

### Identified literature

Transformational change is considered from a number of different perspectives in the literature. In healthcare, the King’s Fund and Health Foundation have examined a range of factors important for successful transformation across different examples of transformation. The CIPD has considered what makes transformation successful from the perspective organisational and people development. A number of peer reviewed research articles also examine evidence of how successful transformation works in healthcare and in other sectors. The literature identified from searching is summarised in Table 1.

### How transformational change is achieved

Despite different perspectives and models of transformational change in the literature, a number of common principles were identified that help to explain how transformational change can be achieved. These are summarised as follows:

#### ❖ Communicating a vision of change

Being able to communicate a vision for transformation that is fundamentally different but also that people find relatable and meaningful is described widely across the literature (1). Using themes that people can understand and engaged with is given an example of the vision can be communicated effectively (1). Leaders are described as having a key responsibility for communicating this vision and inspiring staff to work towards it and which also requires a motivated workforce to be in place (2). The King’s Fund’s examination of a number of different transformation models identified how

change starts with a vision but also develops organically and in unplanned ways around this vision which requires being open to new ways of thinking and doing things (3).

### ❖ **Distributing leadership**

Transformational change is described as requiring leadership that is distributed across multiple levels of a system that builds momentum and ensures sustained engagement (1). A realist review of large system transformation also identifies leadership that is distributed (i.e. shared responsibility across professional groups and partner organisations for delivering change) is essential alongside leadership that is designated so that there is formal responsibility for the change (4). This style of leadership is particularly important for transformational change in healthcare as power and responsibility for change can often be held across autonomous professional groups that will collectively need to lead change (4).

### ❖ **Learning and capability**

The King’s Fund describes how transformational change requires a strong focus on learning and building the skills and confidence required for staff to be effective agents of change (3). Capabilities and skills development for implementation of transformation is also described as requiring commitment of resources (2, 5). Capability to identify and respond to the root causes of problems and analysis based decision making are described as being important from the perspective of transformational change in NHS providers (2). In other examples, the importance of a learning culture is described that emphasises reflective practice and skills development as opposed to just compliance (6). Supporting the development of skills and competencies is also described as being important for empowering staff to participate effectively in change (5).

### ❖ **Emergent change in behaviours and processes**

Transformational change is described as involving multiple, emergent changes in a system that connect and build on each other (1). Reframing and shifting of attitudes and behaviours is described from an organisational development perspective as acting as a springboard for subsequent changes in processes and structures (6). This shift is also described as being something that is incentivised and reinforced through performance management (5).

### ❖ **Service user and community engagement**

The King’s Fund describe the power of action in communities for transforming health and care but how this can be challenging to achieve when change is often driven from the perspective of senior professionals (3). The involvement of service users and their families is identified as a key feature of transformation since the more involved they are the more user-centred services can become (4).

**Table 1. Included Literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Perspective/approach</b>
Health Foundation	Identifying the success factors for transformation from the perspective of NHS providers	2015	This report investigates what makes transformations successful in the context of NHS providers and at a system level and chief executive perspective (2). Interviews with providers allowed identification of seven ‘success

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factors' that were consistently reported as being critical for bringing about transformation.

The factors which are explored in detail in the report are:  
Committed and courageous leaders  
Motivated workforce  
Clear accountability for performance and effective management structures  
Insight from data analysis that enables a fact-based understanding of problems  
Capabilities to identify the root causes of problems and plan an approach to solving them  
Funding for staff to carry out the work of transformation  
A collaborative and supportive local health and social care system

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King's Fund	Strengthening the work of transformational change in healthcare	2018	<p>A recent report from the King's Fund (3) builds on their previous work to examine successful transformation in healthcare that includes the new care models programme in England, high-performing healthcare systems and the role of collaborative leadership practice across boundaries.</p> <p>The report highlights a number of key considerations that can strengthen efforts to transform health and care from examining the experiences of 42 people involved with transformational change in four healthcare organisations: The Bromley Bow Centre in east London; Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust; Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; and Buurtzorg (from the Netherlands).</p>
NHS England	A guide to leading large scale change	2018	<p>This practical guide(1) produced by the NHS England Sustainable Improvement Team, is aimed as those that are involved in work to</p>

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			achieve transformational change in complex health and care environments. An organising framework, which brings together elements for leading large scale change, is outlined as tool for increasing the likelihood of sustainable, large scale change.
CIPD	Landing transformational change: Closing the gap between theory and practice	2015	<p>The CIPD which is the professional body for people development, considers how to close the gap between theory and practice for transformational change and how the themes from their research apply in practice in a 2015 report (5). Organisation case studies provide examples of how transformational change has been approached.</p> <p>The report also makes recommendations for transformational change in organisations that intended for learning and development and human resource management professionals, on the basis that people in these roles would expected to be key initiators and facilitators of transformational change.</p>
A framework for transformational change in organisations		2002	This article(6) presents a framework structured around “three core issues in organisational change management: the nature of organisations and what constitutes an improvement to them, appropriate strategies for leveraging change, and change agent roles.” The purpose of the framework is to offer an alternative to more traditional understandings of organisational change.
Transformational change in health care		2007	This article provides a model for transformational change in health care systems (7). The model is

systems: an organizational model	intended to guide the process of moving from “short-term, isolated performance improvements to sustained, reliable, organization-wide, and evidence-based improvements in patient care.” The model was developed based on comparative case studies conducted in 12 healthcare systems.
<p>These cases support five elements in the model being critical for successful transformation of care in healthcare systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Impetus to transform;</li> <li>2) Leadership commitment to quality;</li> <li>(3) Improvement initiatives that actively engage staff in meaningful problem solving;</li> <li>(4) Alignment to achieve consistency of organization goals with resource allocation and actions at all levels of the organization; and</li> <li>(5) Integration to bridge traditional intra-organizational boundaries among individual components.</li> </ul>	
Large-system transformation in health care: a realist review	<p>2012</p> <p>This Canadian review(4) of examples of successful and less successful transformation initiatives in healthcare, synthesised knowledge of underlying mechanisms how transformation works. The findings of the synthesis propose five “simple rules” of transformation: (1) blend designated leadership with distributed leadership; (2) establish feedback loops; (3) attend to history; (4) engage physicians; and (5) include patients and families.</p>
Rethinking health systems strengthening: key systems thinking tools and strategies	<p>2012</p> <p>This article (8) considers transformation from a systems perspective and presents key systems thinking tools and strategies for transformational</p>

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for transformational  
change

change in health systems:  
collaboration across disciplines,  
sectors and organisations;  
ongoing, iterative learning; and  
transformational leadership.

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Transformational      2016  
change in healthcare:  
an examination of  
four case studies

This article(9) considers four case  
studies: two from the US, one  
from Australia and one from the  
UK. The key features and common  
factors are discussed in relation to  
each which relate to having a 'well  
communicated vision, innovative  
redesign, extensive consultation  
and engagement with staff and  
patients, performance  
management, automated  
information management and  
high-quality leadership'.

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