

# Quest for Facilities A1 – Continuous Improvement

## Guidance Notes



<b>Focus:</b>	To assess how the organisation plans, manages, and embeds continuous improvement across all areas of facility operations, customer experience, and organisational effectiveness.
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### Key elements:

- Clear and systematic planning for improvement
- Use of performance data, customer feedback, and insight to inform priorities
- Involvement of staff, customers, and partners in shaping improvement actions
- Alignment of improvement plans with organisational, local authority, and national priorities
- Ongoing review, learning, and adaptation to ensure progress and sustainability.

### Best Practice Examples

- **Embedding a Continuous Improvement Culture:** Improvement is part of everyday management and culture, driving better customer experiences, safer operations, and more efficient, sustainable facilities. Staff regularly contribute ideas for improving services, and improvement is discussed in every team meeting as a routine agenda item.
- **Centre-Specific and Aligned Goals:** Each site or facility has clear, centre-specific goals, strategies, and targets that reflect local needs and opportunities. These plans are aligned with wider local authority, governing body, and national agendas to ensure consistency with community and sector priorities.
- **Systematic Measurement and Monitoring:** Facilities use key performance indicators (KPIs), such as attendance, user satisfaction, maintenance performance, energy use, and financial outcome are reviewed monthly to track progress against improvement plans and inform decisions.
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Data, audits, customer feedback, and performance trends are routinely analysed to identify improvement opportunities. Changes to programmes or facilities are based on measurable evidence such as satisfaction surveys or participation data.
- **Strategic Resource Allocation:** Budgets, staffing, and technology are planned annually to support improvement projects. Multi-year investment strategies are in place to ensure continuous progress, whether through new equipment, digital systems, or environmental enhancements.

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### Best Practice Examples (continued...)

- **Engaging Staff and Stakeholders:** Along with managers, staff, customers, and stakeholders are involved in improvement planning and the continuous review and adaptation of plans to suit business needs. Staff and key partners share ownership of improvement objectives and outcomes.
- **Transparent Communication of Progress:** Progress on improvement initiatives is shared openly with staff, customers, and stakeholders through newsletters, digital displays, social media updates, dashboards, and staff briefings, ensuring everyone is informed and engaged.
- **Regular Review and Adaptation:** Improvement plans are reviewed quarterly (or more frequently) to reflect new insights, monitoring data, and operational priorities. This ensures improvement activity remains dynamic, relevant, and responsive to the needs of the facility and community.
- **Celebrating Success and Impact:** Achievements such as refurbished spaces, new programmes, energy efficiency gains, or improved customer feedback are formally recognised through events, newsletters, and social media, celebrating the contributions of staff and users.
- **Embedding Innovation and Future Thinking:** Facilities trial new technologies, digital booking systems, and flexible programming options. Lessons learned are captured to inform future developments and longer-term planning.
- **Linking Improvements to Strategic Outcomes:** Every improvement project is clearly linked to organisational objectives, such as increasing participation, enhancing inclusivity, supporting community health, or improving sustainability and outcomes are reported to leadership and stakeholders.
- **Learning and Knowledge Sharing:** Insights from Quest assessments, audits, and feedback are shared across the organisation to spread best practice, encourage innovation, and sustain continuous improvement momentum.

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PLAN	
Challenge: What plans are in place to drive continuous improvement and minimise risk?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no clear plans to improve or manage risks</li> <li>• Actions are reactive, and problems are only dealt with when they occur</li> <li>• Staff are not involved in improvement planning, and there is no link to wider organisational goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some plans exist for improvement and risk management, but they are basic and not consistently followed</li> <li>• Plans are mainly reactive</li> <li>• Staff are sometimes consulted, but involvement is limited</li> <li>• Links to wider goals are unclear.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a structured plan for improvement and risk management</li> <li>• The plan includes clear actions, responsibilities, and timescales</li> <li>• Data, audits, and customer feedback are used to inform decisions</li> <li>• Staff help identify risks and suggest improvements</li> <li>• Progress is reviewed at regular intervals.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement and risk planning are well-established and part of everyday management</li> <li>• Plans are regularly reviewed and updated with input from staff and stakeholders</li> <li>• Staff and stakeholders are actively involved in reviewing and updating plans</li> <li>• Data, audits, and incident learning are used proactively to prevent issues</li> <li>• Plans are aligned with organisational and local priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous improvement and risk management are fully embedded in the organisation’s culture</li> <li>• Staff, customers, and partners help shape and review plans</li> <li>• Real-time data and feedback are used to identify and prevent risks before they occur</li> <li>• Plans are dynamic, innovative, and linked to long-term goals for safety, performance, and customer satisfaction.</li> </ul>

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PLAN	
Challenge: What benchmarking and external influences inform the improvement plans?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No use of benchmarking or external reference points to inform planning</li> <li>Improvement plans are internally focused and rarely reviewed.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some benchmarking or sector reference used informally</li> <li>Limited evidence that findings influence improvement priorities or reviews.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmarking and external influences are used periodically to inform improvements.</li> <li>Plans are reviewed with staff input and adjusted where necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of benchmarking data and sector standards inform planning</li> <li>Benchmarking and external influences have been used to inform improvements planned, and plans are reviewed and adapted throughout the year with staff and stakeholder involvement</li> <li>Clear evidence that learning from others has shaped improvement actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous benchmarking and sector scanning drive innovation and best practice</li> <li>External influences, peer learning, and comparative data are fully integrated into improvement planning and performance management</li> <li>Staff and stakeholders co-interpret data, ensuring ongoing adaptation and sector-leading development.</li> </ul>

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DO	
Challenge: How are staff, customers and stakeholders involved in the planning of the improvement journey?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff, customers, and stakeholders are not involved in planning or reviewing improvements</li> <li>• Communication about improvement activity is minimal.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some consultation occurs with staff or customers, but involvement is limited and irregular</li> <li>• Feedback is collected but not routinely acted upon.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and key stakeholders are involved in developing and reviewing improvement plans. Feedback informs decisions and some actions are adapted as a result</li> <li>• Communication about improvements is clear and consistent.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along with managers, staff, customers, and stakeholders are involved in improvement planning and the continuous review and adaptation to suit the business needs</li> <li>• Engagement is structured, inclusive, and ongoing</li> <li>• Improvement actions are shaped collaboratively, and progress is communicated openly.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement is fully co-created with staff, customers, and partners</li> <li>• Engagement is embedded within the organisation’s culture, with continuous dialogue shaping strategic and operational decisions</li> <li>• Data, feedback, and lived experience drive adaptation and innovation, ensuring the improvement journey remains dynamic and responsive.</li> </ul>

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DO	
Challenge: How are staff, customers and stakeholders informed of progress made in the improvement journey?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff, customers and stakeholders are not informed of progress made in the improvement journey</li> <li>• There are no communication methods in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some progress is communicated, but irregularly or inconsistently</li> <li>• Only a limited number of staff, customers, or stakeholders are aware of updates, and there is no structured approach.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress is communicated regularly through one or two channels (e.g., staff meetings or emails)</li> <li>• Most staff, customers, and stakeholders are aware of improvements, and some feedback is used to inform next steps.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication of progress is planned, consistent, and reaches most staff, customers, and stakeholders through multiple channels (e.g., meetings, newsletters, noticeboards)</li> <li>• Feedback is systematically collected and used to enhance improvements.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress is proactively and systematically communicated across all relevant channels to all staff, customers, and stakeholders</li> <li>• Engagement is high, feedback is actively sought and embedded into improvement plans, and measurable impact is evident as a result of these communications.</li> </ul>

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DO	
Challenge: Are there sufficient resources to deliver the planned improvements (including innovation and technology)?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources are insufficient or not allocated to deliver planned improvements</li> <li>Innovation and technology needs are not considered, and no long-term investment planning is in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some resources are available for planned improvements, but allocation is inconsistent or limited</li> <li>Innovation and technology are considered occasionally, and longer-term investment is only partially planned.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient resources are generally available and allocated to deliver planned improvements</li> <li>Innovation and technology are considered, and there is some planning for longer-term investment.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources are clearly allocated and sufficient to deliver planned improvements, including innovation and technology</li> <li>Longer-term investment is actively planned and supports ongoing development of the facility.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources are fully allocated and strategically managed to deliver current and planned improvements</li> <li>Innovation and technology are embedded in plans, and long-term investment is proactively secured to ensure sustained facility improvement and impact.</li> </ul>

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MEASURE, MONITOR AND REVIEW	
Challenge: Do measures and reviews take place throughout the year to ensure the plan is progressing?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No measures or reviews take place during the year</li> <li>Progress of the improvement plan is not monitored, and plans are not adapted.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some measures and reviews occur, but they are irregular or inconsistent</li> <li>The improvement plan is partially informed by these activities, but adaptations are limited.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular measures and reviews take place to inform the progress of the improvement plan</li> <li>Plans are adapted occasionally based on findings, but processes are not fully systematic.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures and reviews take place consistently throughout the year</li> <li>The improvement plan is actively informed and adapted based on findings, ensuring progress is monitored and improvements are implemented effectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures and reviews are systematic, frequent, and embedded in practice</li> <li>Progress is continuously monitored, and the improvement plan is proactively adapted throughout the year</li> <li>Evidence demonstrates clear impact on facility performance, user experience, and outcomes.</li> </ul>

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IMPACT	
Challenge: Have improvements made over the last year made a difference?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No improvements have been made over the last twelve months, or improvements have been made but there is no evidence of impact</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders have not been informed.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some improvements have been made, and limited evidence of impact exists</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders have been informed occasionally, but communication is inconsistent.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements have been made over the last twelve months, with evidence of positive impact</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders have generally been informed of these improvements throughout the year.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements have clearly made a difference, with evidence demonstrating enhanced outcomes, performance, or user experience</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders are consistently informed of the impacts throughout the year</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements over the last twelve months have had significant, measurable impact on facility performance, user experience, and outcomes</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders are proactively informed and engaged with the evidence of improvements, and the facility can demonstrate clear, lasting benefits.</li> </ul>

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IMPACT	
Challenge: Are improvements celebrated with staff, customers and stakeholders?	
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No celebration or recognition of improvements takes place</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders are not informed of the impacts achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some recognition or celebration of improvements occurs, but it is informal or irregular</li> <li>Only a limited audience is made aware.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements are celebrated on a semi-regular basis</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders are generally informed, and celebrations or recognition are planned to some extent.</li> </ul>
<b>Very Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management ensures that improvements are celebrated regularly and in a planned way</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders are clearly informed and engaged in recognising successes.</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management ensures that improvements are celebrated regularly and in a planned way</li> <li>Staff, customers, and stakeholders are clearly informed and engaged in recognising successes.</li> </ul>