Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Action planning toolkit

Pathways to Recovery: Redesigning Residential Rehabilitation Pathways

December 2024

NHS SCOTLAND

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Contents

Introduction 2

Developing Aim Statements 2

SMART Goal Setting 3

Driver Diagrams 6

Risk Management and Mitigation 7

Pareto Charts 7

Prioritisation and Critical Path Analysis 9

Further Support 10

Introduction

In June 2020, the Residential Rehabilitation Development Working Group (RRDWG) was established to advise Scottish Ministers on the provision of drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation services across Scotland. Following the recommendations of the RRDWG, Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) were commissioned to work with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) to improve the long-term health outcomes for people who seek recovery from drug and alcohol use by embedding good practice guidance to support the redesign of pathways into, through and out of residential rehabilitation.

To support ADPs to assess the current residential rehabilitation pathway, HIS completed a Thematic Analysis Report for all ADPs which highlighted several areas of considerations regarding the residential rehabilitation pathway and were reviewed and agreed with ADPs. ADPs are working in collaboration with HIS to create a detailed action plan which will identify short, medium and long-term goals.

This Action Planning Toolkit provides information, tools and resources which could be helpful to ADPs when identifying and prioritising actions.

Developing Aim Statements

An aim statement should be a brief description of what it is you intend to accomplish. It captures the common purpose that your team are working towards, helping to:

- Keep improvement activity focused on the original purpose.
- Makes clear the scale of improvement expected.
- Make it easy for everyone to understand what you are trying to achieve.

An aim statement should be no longer than one sentence and should include the following components:

When you want to achieve it by?

- Setting a timeframe for achieving the goal provides a clear statement of intent for reviewing progress.
- Your timeframe should be realistic but aspirational – far enough in the future that it is possible to achieve your aim but not so far that it does not feel like a priority.

By how much do you want to improve?

- Identifying how much you would like to improve by (for example 14%-30%, 5/10-9/10 and so on) will help to focus the improvement work and providing a starting point for developing changes ideas and monitoring.

Who will benefit from this improvement?

- Define the specific population whose lives will be affected by the improvement effort. This helps to focus the work and provide a reminder for the rationale behind it.

What are you trying to improve?

- What and/or where will be affected or benefit from the improvement work?

Helpful resources

- Video walkthrough on Developing an Aim Statement (5mins).
- Document on Developing an Aim Statement (1.25 pages).
- For those with access, a TURAS module on Developing Aims and Change Ideas (30mins).

Example Aim Statement

The example below demonstrates how working through each component can help to create a clear aim statement.

What?	To increase the number of women accessing residential rehabilitation.
For Whom?	Women in local population.
How much?	30%, in line with the drug death statistics for Area ADP. The number of successful female admissions to residential rehabilitation is currently 14%.
By When?	October 2025
Aim:	**To increase the number of women successfully accessing residential rehabilitation in Area ADP from 14% to 30% by October 2025.**

Other examples of aim statements include:

- To increase the number individuals within the ADP leaving residential rehabilitation placement with a coproduced action plan from 70% to 100% by April 2026.
- To increase the involvement of family members in aftercare planning for individuals in the ADP who are leaving residential rehabilitation from 30% to 75% by March 2026.
- To increase the number of ADP staff who have completed Community Reinforcement and Family Training from 40% to 90% by December 2025.

SMART Goal Setting

When identifying key actions to help achieve your aim, it's important to ensure that these actions are clear, attainable, and meaningful to the overall aim. It may be helpful to consider the SMART goal principle while creating these actions.

What are SMART Goals?

SMART is an acronym which is frequently used when creating goals. To make sure goals are clear and reachable, it is suggested that each should be:

- Specific - simple, sensible, significant.
- Measurable - meaningful, motivating.
- Achievable/Attainable - agreed, possible.
- Relevant - reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based.
- Time bound - time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive.

1. Specific

Your actions should be clear and specific, otherwise you won't be able to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated to achieve it. When drafting your action, consider the below questions:

- What do we want to accomplish?
- Why is this action important?
- Who is involved?
- Where is it located?
- Which resources or limits are involved?

2. Measurable

It's important and helpful to consider how you will measure progress against your actions. Assessing progress helps maintain focus, meet deadlines, and communicate the progress which has been made towards your action and overall aim. To help consider how you will measure progress, consider the below questions:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

3. Achievable/Attainable

Your aim should be aspirational; however, your actions need to be realistic and attainable to be successful. An achievable action will usually answer questions such as:

- How long do we need to complete this action?
- Do you have the right skills and resources?

4. Relevant

This step is about ensuring that your goal matters to you, and that it also aligns with other relevant goals. We all need support and assistance in achieving our goals, but it's important to retain control over them. So, make sure that your plans drive everyone forward, but that

you're still responsible for achieving your own goal. A relevant action can answer "yes" to these questions:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Does this action link into our organisation's strategic plan/objectives?

5. Time-bound

Every goal needs a target date, so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals. A time-bound action will usually answer these questions:

- What can I do today?
- When do I realistically believe I will be able to complete this action?
- Does this action rely on any other actions being completed first?

When to use this tool?

Keeping this framework in mind while identifying key actions will help to ensure they are clear and meaningful.

Helpful resources

- Video on Writing Effective SMART Goals (4min watch).
- Article on Writing SMART Goals including examples.

Examples of SMART Actions

Key Actions What actions will you take to achieve your aim?	**Lead**	**When**
Liaise with Residential Rehab providers to understand different models of care offered	Euan McGregor / Assessment Team Lead	January 2025
Complete an audit of a sample of unsuccessful assessments in the last 12months to highlight common themes of barriers to Residential Rehabilitation Admission within the local area.	Lorraine Kelly / Project Officer	December 2025
Develop EQIA for the Residential Rehabilitation Pathway to develop understanding of how people with protected characteristics are accessing the pathway and increase awareness of negative impacts.	Billy Connelly / Equality and Diversity Lead	January 2025

Driver Diagrams

A driver diagram is a visual display of how your actions will contribute to the achievement of an aim. It can also help you to identify actions in some cases.

The initial driver diagram for an improvement project may illustrate the team's current ideas and hunches of how outcomes can be improved. These ideas and hunches can then be tested and enhanced with Plan Do Study Act Cycles (we will cover this later in the programme). This clear picture of a team's shared view is a useful tool for communicating to a range of stakeholders where a team is testing and working.

When to use this tool?

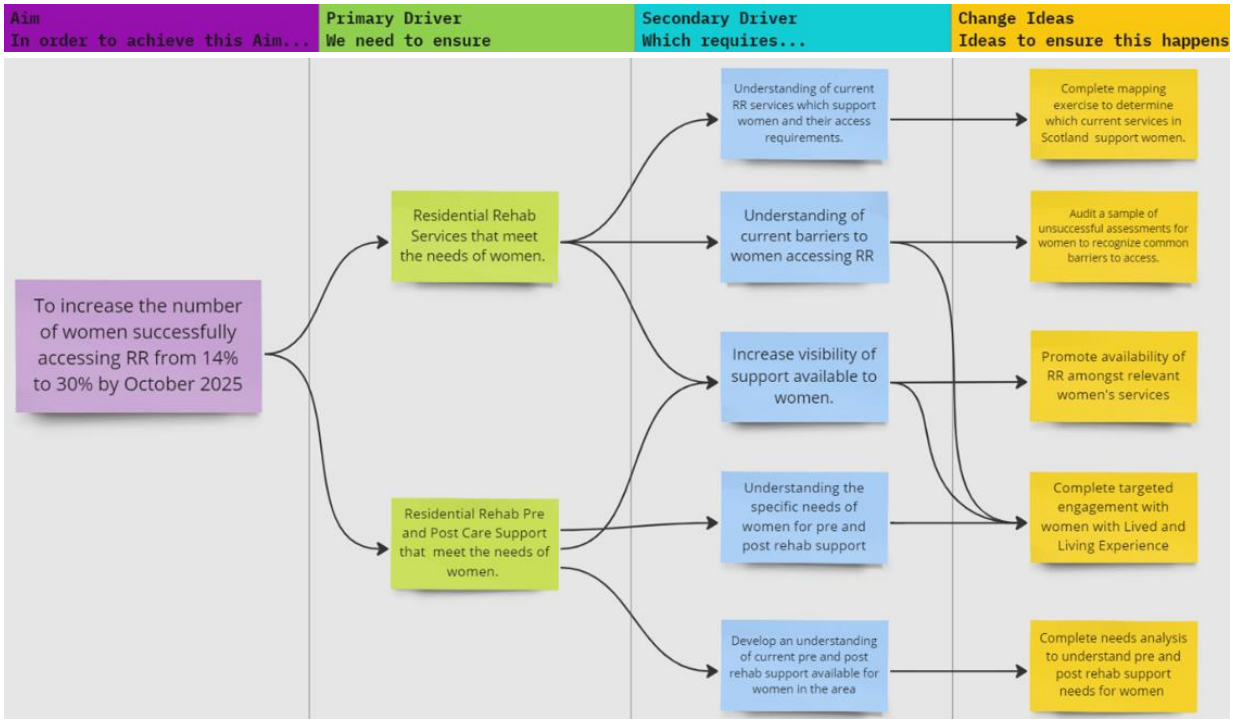
Once you have completed your aim statement, you can use a driver diagram to help identify your key actions required to achieve your aim.

Helpful resources

- Video walkthrough of creating a driver diagram (6mins).
- Video on How to use a Driver Diagram (6mins).
- For those with access, a TURAS module on Developing Aims and Change Ideas (30mins).
- Blank Template for Driver Diagrams.

Example Driver Diagram

The below driver diagram for "increasing access to residential rehabilitation for women" is an example of how aims and actions within your action plans can be connected using a driver diagram.



Risk Management and Mitigation

Risk management and mitigation is the process of identifying hazards and evaluating any associated risks within a situation, and then implementing reasonable control measures to remove or reduce their impact.

It will be important for your action plan to outline any risks you may have to the progress of your improvement work, and what needs to be considered to reduce or remove this risk. This may also help identify and prioritise further resources which would be required to ensure risk minimisation.

Your organisation will have its own risk management process which we would encourage to be utilised for this section. Within the action plan, we are looking for any relevant risks to your aim statement or key actions to be listed, and any mitigations to be outlined within the template.

Example Risk Management and Mitigation

The below risk is an example of how you may outline the risks within the action planning template.

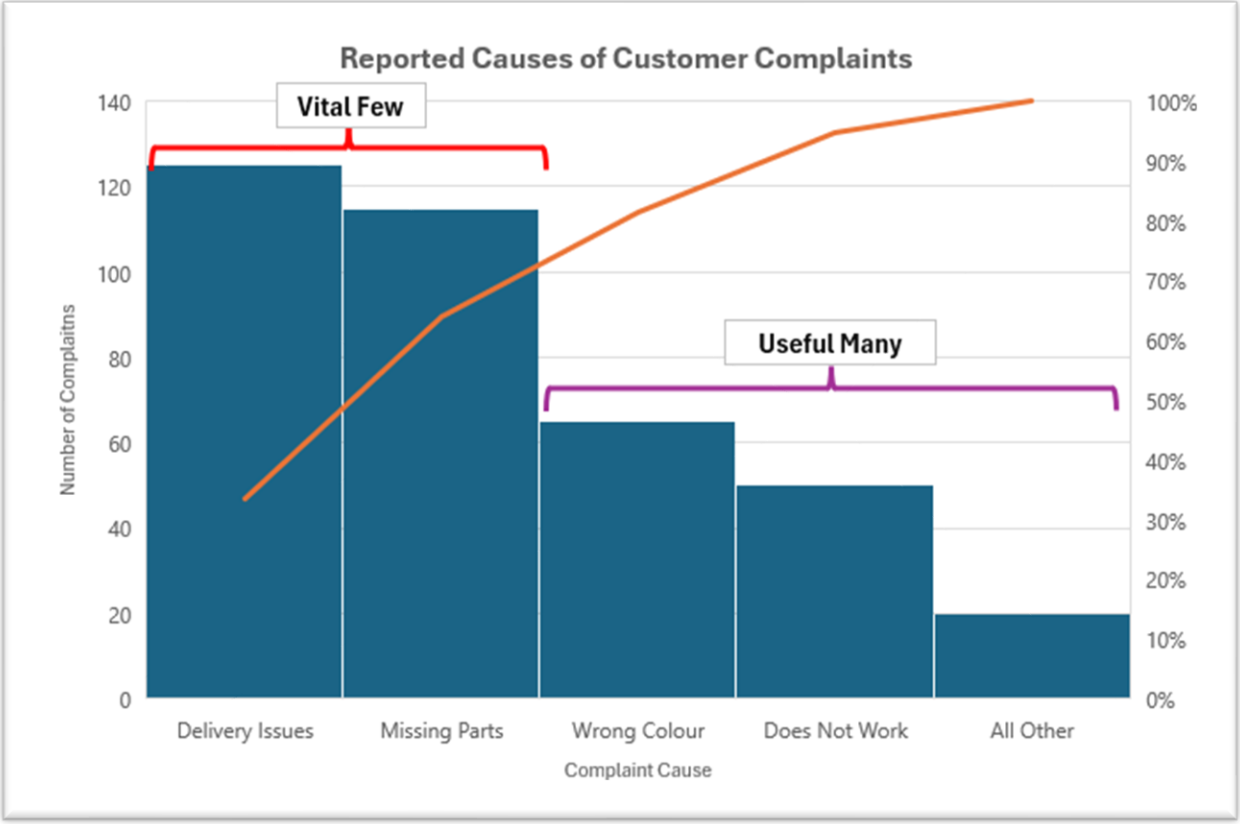
Risk (Barrier to delivery)	How might we overcome this risk?
There is a risk that our local recovery community will begin to feel engagement fatigue as we build our understanding.	Making sure each engagement piece has a clear purpose and output, which is communicated to attendees. Connect engagement work from other workstreams to reduce duplication. Provide safeguarding for people using a trauma informed approach to engagement activities. Utilise a variety of engagement tools to get more in-depth and meaningful outputs (see Lived and Living Experience Involvement Resource Pack).

Pareto Charts

The Pareto principle can help teams concentrate improvement efforts on the factors that have the greatest impact and can helps teams explain their rationale for focusing on certain areas over others.

According to the “Pareto principle”, also known as the “80/20 rule”, in any group of factors that contribute to an overall effect, roughly 80% of the effect comes from 20% of the causes.

A Pareto chart is a type of bar chart in which the various factors that contribute to an overall effect are arranged in order from the largest to the smallest contribution to the effect. This ordering helps identify the “vital few” (the factors that have the largest contribution to the effect and therefore warrant the most attention), as distinguished from the “useful many” (factors that, while useful to know about, have a relatively smaller contribution to the effect).



When to use this tool?

If you are struggling to know where to start with your actions, this principle could be a helpful place to begin. By using a pareto chart, you can identify the factors which will have the biggest impact.

Helpful resources

- Video on the Pareto Principle (6mins).
- Video on Pareto Analysis and how the charts work (7mins).
- A guide to creating a pareto chart in excel.
- A video guide to creating a pareto chart in excel (6mins).
- For those with access, a TURAS Module on Understanding Your System (30mins).

Prioritisation and Critical Path Analysis

Project prioritisation is a project management process of determining the best order for completing a group of projects or tasks. It may be based on criteria like how the work impacts business or financial goals, organisational risk, staff availability, and/or potential for success.

To support a clear understanding of the size, scale and timelines for the project/action plan, it is helpful to identify all of the actions required, understand the interdependent nature of some actions and work out which actions require to be completed to allow other subsequent actions to take place.

There is a wide range of online resources supporting effective project management and prioritisation. One of the more effective approaches is Critical Path Analysis. Critical Path Analysis (CPA) is a project management technique that maps out every key task that is necessary to complete a project. It is the entire path of a project, from start to finish, going through all the critical and non-critical tasks. As it identifies the tasks, it also notes the amount of time necessary to finish each activity and the project. CPA is used to set a realistic deadline for a project and to track its progress along the way.

When to use this tool?

Once you have populated your action plan with the required tasks across all areas of consideration, you will then be able to use this approach to identify the order in which actions will be completed.

Helpful resources

- A guide to the Project Management Prioritisation Process.
- A Practical Guide to prioritisation for Project Managers.
- Online resource for Critical Path Analysis.

Example of prioritisation

Self-Assessment Theme 1.2: Understanding the needs of people with protected characteristics.	
Area of Consideration 1.2: To support a greater understanding of the needs of people with protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the pathway should be completed to understand and highlight how people with protected characteristics are accessing the pathway and any negative impacts. The EQIA can highlight where future support can be developed, considering the varying needs of different people and groups. Healthcare Improvement Scotland can provide support in understanding the EQIA approach.	
Aim – What are you trying to achieve?	

Key Actions What actions will you take to achieve your aim?	Lead	When	Priority
Complete an EQIA of the Residential Rehab pathway			1
Identify any gaps in knowledge and evidence for people with protected characteristics			2
Carry out targeted engagement with people identified from the EQIA to identify barriers and what works			3
Incorporate identified improvements to support people with protected characteristics into updated pathway			4

The theme is to understand the needs of people with protected characteristics. The table above shows the key actions required and the order they need to be completed in to achieve the aim.

For example, the EQIA needs to be done first to identify gaps in knowledge and as such is priority 1. Only by completing priority actions 1 and 2 would we be able to complete priority action 3. Only once priority actions 1, 2 and 3 are completed would we be in apposition to incorporate improvements at priority action 4.

Further Support

Information in this document highlights helpful and good practice resources to inform your action planning. If you would like to discuss any of the guidance and resources further or require additional support, please contact the HIS Pathways to Recovery: Redesigning Residential Rehabilitation Pathways team by emailing us at his.housing@nhs.scot.

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Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Edinburgh Office	Glasgow Office
Gyle Square	Delta House
1 South Gyle Crescent	50 West Nile Street
Edinburgh	Glasgow
EH12 9EB	G1 2NP
0131 623 4300	0141 225 6999

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot