

Using a driver diagram and prioritisation matrix to focus a primary care improvement project

About driver diagrams

A driver diagram is a visual tool that helps teams map out the logic of their improvement work. It shows how the aim connects to the drivers that influence it, and the change ideas the team plan to test. The tool can be used early in the quality improvement (QI) journey once the aim has been defined.

A prioritisation matrix supports decision making by helping teams rank change ideas in order of importance, using pre-defined criteria relating to impact and effort. It is particularly useful when selecting which idea to test first, encouraging teams to begin with those that are low effort but high impact.

Primary care example

Work was performed by a general practice (GP) team in the west coast of Scotland participating in the primary care improvement collaborative. Participants in this work received a named QI coach from Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

The practice manager led the improvement project, working with others in the practice team including GPs and the administrative team.

Aim

To reduce the number of 'did not attend' (DNA) appointments by 10% by September 2025.

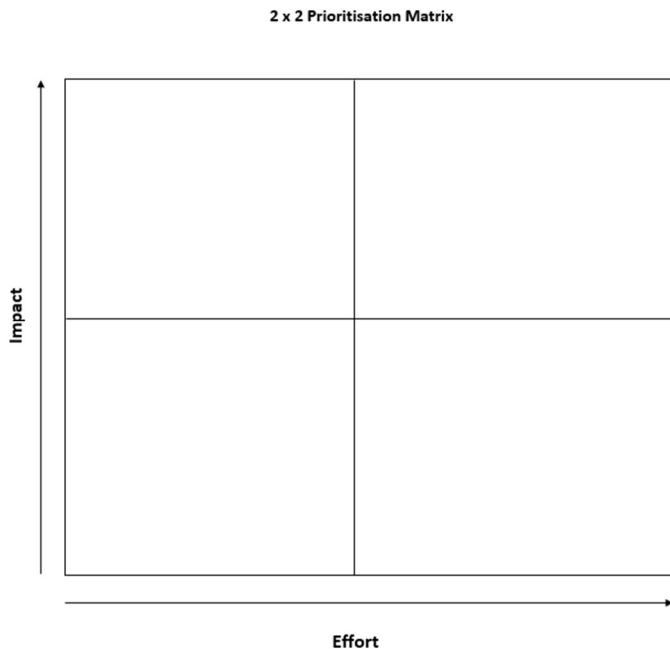
Activity

- After reviewing DNA appointment data, the practice manager identified a number of change ideas. The QI coach emphasised the importance of starting small and selecting one idea to test.
- The practice manager discussed potential change ideas with the GP partners, practice nurses, and the administrative team, and identified several changes they felt would help them achieve their aim.
- Working with the QI coach to review the driver diagram, the practice manager worked to distinguish between 'drivers', change ideas', and 'tasks'. Doing this helped to fully understand the relationships between elements of the change theory.
- The practice manager then worked with GP partners and the administrative team to

complete a prioritisation matrix (*Figure 1*), using criteria based on effort and impact to guide their decision on which change idea to test first.

- Both tools were completed by the practice team and reviewed by the practice manager with support from the QI coach within a four-week period.

Figure 1: Blank prioritisation matrix.



Learning and impact

- Developing a driver diagram helped the practice manager, GP partners and administrative team to clarify their change ideas and key drivers.
- The team selected a 'low effort, high impact' change idea from their prioritisation matrix to begin testing through Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles, supported by a PDSA tracker and measurement plan.
- Sharing their change ideas during a group coaching session led to valuable connections with another team who had tested a different approach to reducing DNAs in their practice. The QI coach also supported the team by sharing relevant resources from previous collaborative teams working on similar projects.

Further information

For more information on Driver Diagrams please visit: [Driver Diagram | Turas | Learn](#)

Acknowledgements

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