The Change Jigsaw

This change management jigsaw is adapted from the steps for change identified by John Kotter in his book on change management “Leading Change” (Harvard Business School Press, 1996). It has been based on experience within social care of managing service transformation and change programmes, and identifying what commonly goes right and wrong.

Each horizontal row of the jigsaw is focused on a theme:

- The top row creates the climate for change
- The middle row focuses on enabling and engaging stakeholders in change
- The bottom row focuses on implementing and sustaining change

Each piece of the jigsaw shows what is essential for change at that stage and what symptoms may be seen if that essential element is missing or not fully covered.

1.1 Burning platform

There needs to be a compelling reason to change.

Practitioners (and partners) must believe that they can’t go on without change taking place.

Develop a rationale at the personal, emotional and human level. People will often go to extraordinary lengths if they believe in the change.

Raising a feeling of urgency is the first and most critical step in a change effort.

1.2 Vision

Effective change needs a clear vision for the future state that is compatible with local and/or national objectives.

Without a clear vision there will be confusion, poor planning and people will not be able to pull together to effect change.

Visualise the impact of change on daily behaviour. How will it feel? What are the benefits?

Share your vision with the communities you work for.

Is your vision compelling? Does it make you want to get out of bed on a cold, wet Monday morning in February (or any morning!)?

1.3 Leadership

Every good change initiative needs a group of influential, effective leaders across a service, organisation or partnership.

It is important to get the right people in place who are fully committed to the change initiative and who are able to support in other areas of the service.

Change initiatives don't occur in a vacuum. Effective leadership is about promoting alignment with other compatible initiatives and programmes.

2.1 Capacity & capability

Without time, finance and the skills to effect change the initiative or programme will falter, leading to frustrated, de-motivated and stressed practitioners.

Change programmes need to be practically planned and activities prioritised within available resources.

What are there steps that need to be taken to develop the competencies and capability of those individuals who will be key to the success of the change project?

2.2 Communicate & engage

Once a vision and strategy have been developed, they must be communicated to stakeholders in order to gain understanding and engagement.

Sending clear, credible, and heartfelt messages about the direction of change will help establish buy-in and provide an impetus for getting people to act.

If people don't have sufficient information then resistance usually occurs.

2.3 Ownership at all levels

New systems that are imposed from the top down are less likely to survive – this factor contributes to the high rate of failure for change initiatives.

Engage and involve as many stakeholders as possible to design, create and give feedback on new ways of working.

Change is not just about the motive, but also the opportunities to achieve change.

3.1 Quick wins

Over-planning and little action can see change projects getting stuck. Always find quick and visible deliverables to make change real to practitioners and communities.

Quick wins nourish faith in the change effort, reward those delivering the change, keep the critics at bay, and build momentum.

3.2 Personal impact

A change project based solely on rational arguments will only win the minds, not the hearts of people.

Change will affect people emotionally and may create anxiety. Ask questions and provide space to listen to personal fears and goals. Seek genuine understanding and check back with others – do not assume you understand!

Find out what people do want, by asking them to rephrase what they don't want, and coach them to identify how they can make the difference.

3.3 Embed change so it's business as usual

You may feel by the time you get to this point that you're at the end of the change process BUT not infrequently initiatives will stall or revert to the typical way 'things get done around here.'

Take steps to ensure that change becomes business as usual.

Make sure your learning from change is captured and shared and provides a platform for new initiatives.