

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT – ASSESSMENT CHARACTERISTICS

(Adapted from a model developed by DWP)



	Preparation		First steps		Bedding in			Refining		Sustaining	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leadership	Leaders recognise the need to develop capability for improvement in their areas	Leaders understand the wider strategic challenges, have reviewed improvement capability within their teams and identified resource to provide support for improvement.	Leaders have engaged the wider leadership team to develop the vision and priorities and have engaged with customers to clarify expectations. Leaders demonstrate ownership of improvement objectives in their areas.	Leaders have communicated the vision, priorities and targets effectively to their teams. Leaders demonstrate commitment to improvement.	Leaders demonstrate engagement in change initiatives and proactively remove barriers to good performance. Leaders show ownership of processes in their areas.	Leaders are engaged in driving improvement, demonstrate commitment to achieving targets and involve customers in process improvement.	Leaders regularly evaluate team performance, providing response and support. Leaders can use a range of problem solving method and have systematic contact with customers.	Leaders encourage teams to share good practice to improve performance. Leaders provide coaching and advice to improve understanding and performance.	Leaders perform structured workplace and customer reviews at specified intervals to drive improvement. People are actively encouraged to participate in team meetings, problem solving events and to go to see good practice in action.	Leaders actively coach and mentor teams in solving problems at their level. Leaders support and encourage people to demonstrate ownership of and commitment to improvements. Teams actively participate in problem solving.	Leaders relentlessly focus on improving process, customer and employee experience. Leaders receive consistently high scores in customer and employee surveys.
People	People have limited or no understanding of customer performance goals and there is limited ownership of processes or activity.	High level customer and performance goals have been discussed and agreed. People understand the need for improvement and their role in bringing it about.	People understand the main tools for supporting improvement in their areas and have started to understand how problem solving can improve their own work.	People have assessed their key processes and addressed how they could be improved. Activities that do not add value are beginning to be removed.	People operate revised / improved processes <i>with support</i> . Process owners actively encourage improvements and share good practice in designing them.	People operate revised processes <i>without support</i> . Problem solving activities help to refine practices and contribute to other improvements.	People can use a range of problem solving methods effectively and can offer constructive feedback to improve team performance.	People routinely seek coaching / advice to improve understanding and performance and use problem solving methods. People understand their input to customer satisfaction.	People actively participate in team meetings and problem solving events. Standard working practices are actively and constructively challenged.	People demonstrate ownership of and commitment to exceed targets (but not at the expense of other targets).	People are continuously striving to improve performance. People seek coaching and feedback to improve performance.
Capability	Little or no capability to drive improvement	Central resource (e.g. team/pool) to help provide capability/ expertise is in place, with any development needs identified.	Resource providing capability has begun relevant development (including deepening own understanding as well as helping others to strengthen theirs).	Central resource actively engaged in improvement activity.	Central resource has demonstrated its ability to improve outputs / outcomes.	Groups / units developing own capability, providing support for improvement in prioritised/key business areas, <i>with assistance of central resource</i> .	Groups' / units' internal capability can improve processes and focus on customers in <i>most business areas</i> , with <i>only limited support from central resource</i> .	Internal capability can improve processes and focus on customers in <i>all business areas</i> , <i>without support from central resource</i> .	Business area has its own change capability to sustain improvement and does not need external support. Internal capability prepared for wider/cross-functional/end-to-end challenges.	Internal capability can solve problems and coach across functional boundaries.	Other areas of the department regularly request expertise and advice. The business area is a showcase for continuous improvement.
Use of information	Measures (baseline and/or improvement) have not been set or agreed.	Senior management takes the lead in developing constructive measures and ambitious targets aligned with customer needs / feedback and strategic challenges.	Initial measures and targets have been set. Leaders understand their role and accountability in achieving the targets.	Measures and targets have been communicated and discussed with people. People understand their role and accountability for achieving the targets.	Targets in place and monitored and reviewed in team meetings, with relevant discussion and problem solving.	A systematic approach to performance measurement is in place, actively reviewed by senior managers. Problem solving activity is delivering improved results and less variability.	Problem solving is used systematically in teams to understand and correct performance problems.	Required performance levels have been achieved consistently for the past quarter. All team members are engaged in waste elimination activities to sustain improvement.	Good practice is shared between people, teams and units. Senior team reviews targets to maintain challenge.	Teams continually challenge targets; leaders review targets to drive even better performance.	Performance measures reflect strategic business and customer needs / feedback. Performance consistently exceeds agreed targets.
Customers (includes internal and external customers as well as stakeholders)	Little or no understanding of who customers are.	Customers have been identified and their needs understood (and, where possible, quantified). There is awareness of the need to consider end-to-end processes.	Customer needs / feedback are communicated. People are aware of the commitments made to customers.	Information on customer needs / feedback is cascaded to people.	Key work processes are designed around customer needs / feedback.	A process to understand customer needs / feedback is in place. Evolving customer needs are tracked and actioned. People understand how their work affects customers.	Regular dialogue with customers established. Teams are regularly updated about customer satisfaction levels.	Regularly meeting customer needs. People aware of current satisfaction levels for key customers in relation to their own work area and are striving to improve performance.	Consistently meeting customer needs. Teams anticipate and initiate solutions before requests are made complaints lodged.	Consistently meeting internal and external customer needs and managing customer expectations.	Active involvement with customers to create and deliver innovative processes and services.
Tools and techniques	Little or no evidence of formal review of ways of working. Improvement processes are reactive. Many	Some evidence of mapping of current process / improvement work in key areas.	Evidence of having considered future / desired processes / ways of working in key areas, with basic planning,	Standard processes /ways of working are effectively resourced and enabled by people who are fully	People are fully engaged in working to the agreed standards and understand the need to improve	Standards and management are in place to sustain and drive further improvements.	Processes are continuously improved to drive out waste and improve quality.	Processes are designed to minimise waiting and delays and to improve flow of work.	Processes are designed to minimise the need for managerial intervention. The timing of processes	Process management is embedded 'in the line', with managers at all levels actively involved.	All process outputs consistently meet customer needs over time, with stable or reducing resource.

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	work-arounds and inconsistencies exist.		control and evaluation in place.	engaged. Practices align with customer needs.	further.				is designed around customer needs.		