Service Review Guide
For departments and faculties

This guide scales the University-wide service review model to one for departmental/faculty/unit teams to use.

Focus
Collaborating, Enabling, Improving

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Professional Services Together

What is a service review?

Service

In this guide, a **service** is activity provided through a combination of processes, policies, procedures and advice to deliver a beneficial outcome to stakeholder groups. Typically, in the University, a service is managed or provided by professional services staff for definable users or beneficiaries – such as faculty, students, donors, the public, other professional services staff - or to meet compliance or other regulations placed on the entire organisation.
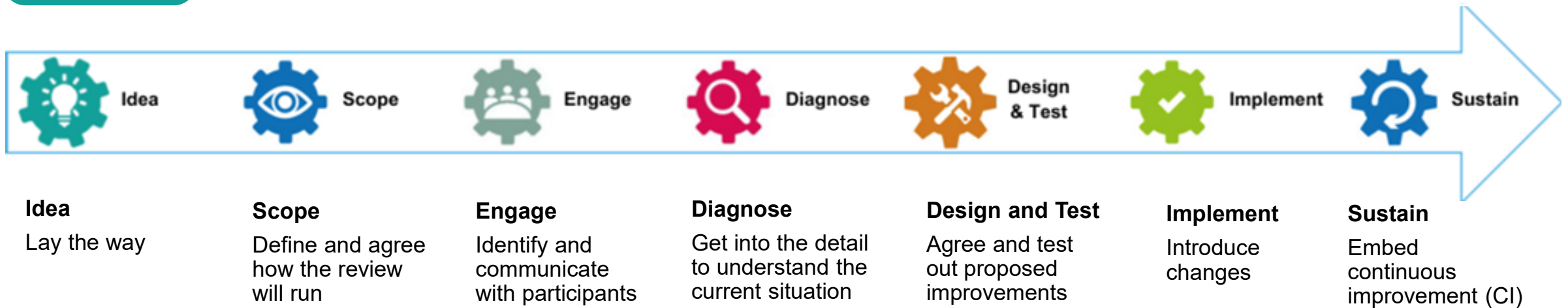
Service reviews

Service reviews provide a structured, proactive and comprehensive approach to understanding and improving all aspects of the delivery of our services and adapting them to stakeholders' changing needs. Service reviews are an important part of Professional Services Together.

? Where to start?

The approach

The service review methodology consists of a series of stages to work through in turn.

Idea	Scope	Engage	Diagnose	Design & Test	Implement	Sustain

Idea
Lay the way

Scope
Define and agree how the review will run

Engage
Identify and communicate with participants

Diagnose
Get into the detail to understand the current situation

Design and Test
Agree and test out proposed improvements

Implement
Introduce changes

Sustain
Embed continuous improvement (CI)

First step

Before launching the review, it is important to complete a small amount of concept work. This will shape and enable the work ahead.
So, this guide starts there: at the Idea stage.

Idea

This stage provides a basis for more detailed scoping, initial planning of your review and securing the co-operation and/or approval of key people. The following page outlines the questions to be asked.
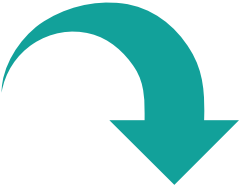
Idea

What service will be reviewed?

Is what you have in mind a service or multiple services that might better be reviewed separately?

Who are the service providers?

Is the service provided in collaboration with users or beneficiaries? This will shape the governance set-up.

What are the review's aims?

What has prompted the review and why this particular service? What improvements are intended? What will be out of scope?

## Who will advocate for the review?

Secure the support of an interested, senior sponsor who can carry sway with the people you'll need to influence, sees the need for improvement and will commit the time needed to champion, figurehead and chair the review.

Note how this person reacts to your initial pitch and refine how you describe the proposal to better resonate with stakeholders as you progress.
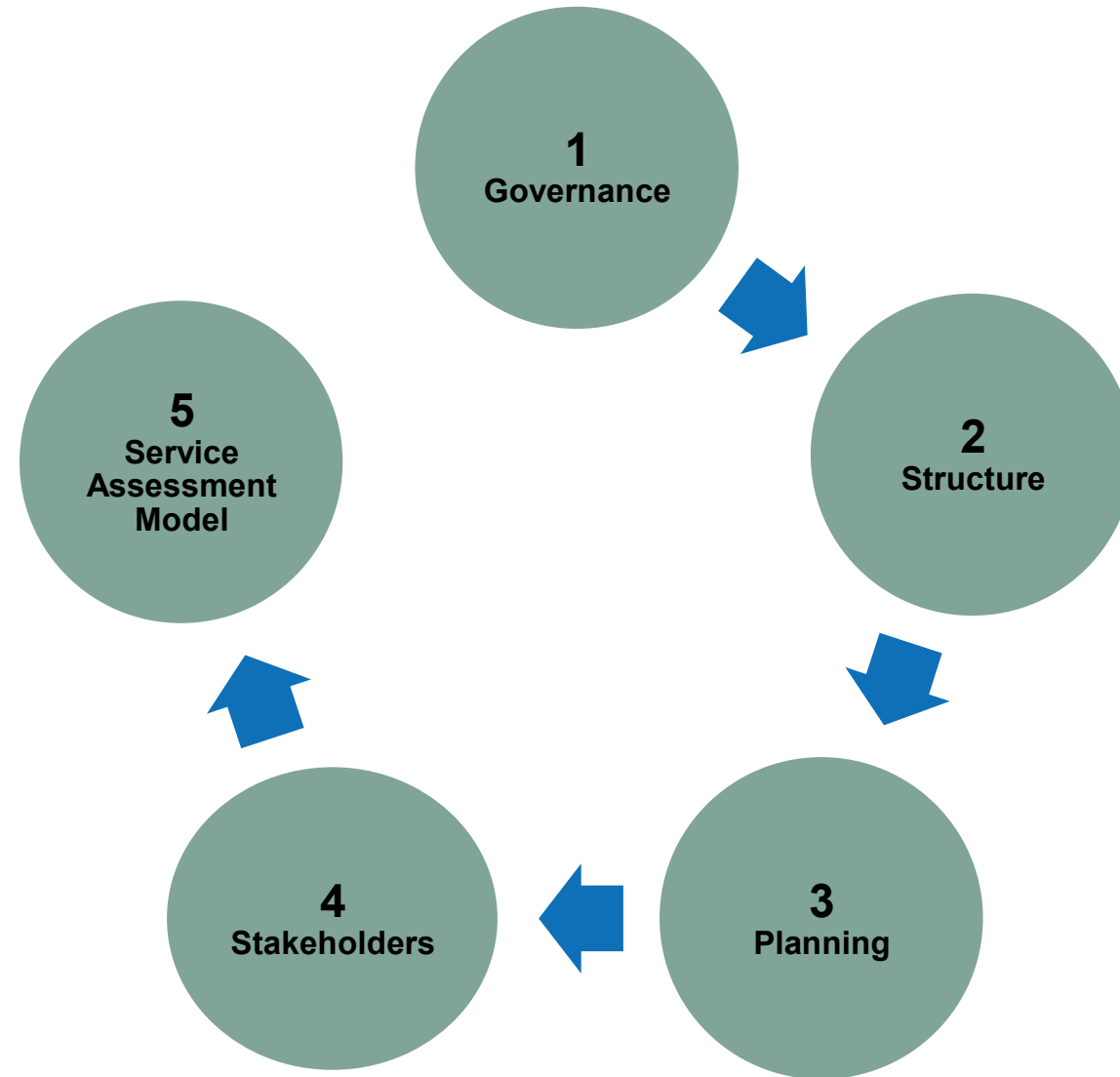
Scope

In this phase, you will develop and document the scope and approach for the service review, seek input from relevant parties and gain the agreement you need to proceed from the appropriate person or group; this is whoever can ensure and support implementation of the review recommendations.

Idea   Scope   Engage   Diagnose   Design & Test   Implement   Sustain
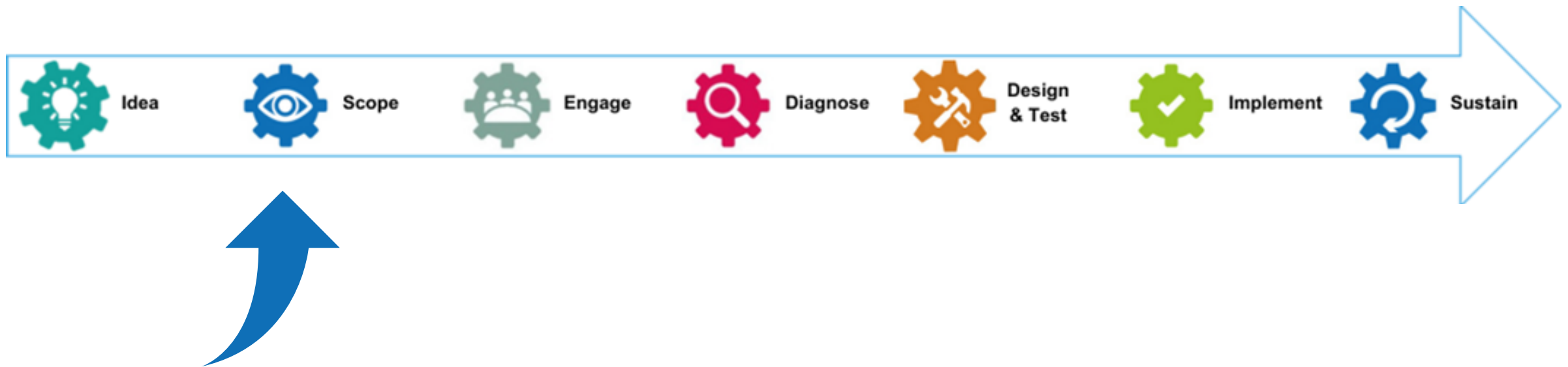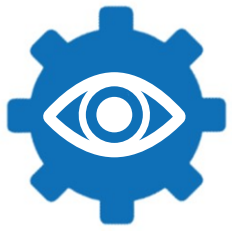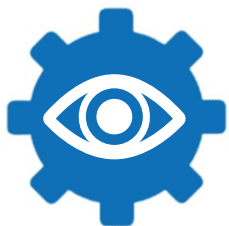
Scope

There are quite a few steps in this phase, but they are important to ensure that there is common agreement on what the review is covering and how it will be achieved.

Read more about each step on the following pages.

Scope 1: Governance

Identify the arrangements for oversight of the review, to strengthen its legitimacy and optimise momentum

Guiding principles

- Ensure vital interests are represented
- Provide a way to resource-check potential solutions

Considerations

- Who are the service users?
- Are any of them also involved in providing the service? If so, is it integral to their role, or more remote/incidental?
- A **stakeholder map** (see: Scope 5) may help identify any 'key players', who should normally be included in oversight
- The more integral a service is to research and teaching, the more likely it is to have key players from outside professional services staff

Actions

- Convene an oversight group for the review
- Include representatives of service providers and users, resource allocators (equipment, staff, budget etc), and the sponsor as chair
- Set clear, transparent lines of accountability to existing governance (for example, as a working group or subcommittee), via which recommendations of the review can be approved for implementation
- Ensure members have relevant knowledge, time and a commitment to see improvements

Terms of reference for the oversight group include:

- Advice and insight to progress the review
- Oversight and challenge to ensure delivery in line with the Charter (see: Scope 2)
- Key decision-making and approval of reports and recommendations
- Approval of requests for changes in scope or approach
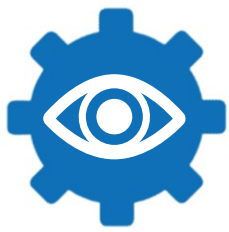
Scope 2: Structure

Produce a **Charter** to help structure your review and gain a common understanding of the objectives and approach. It is concise: 2 pages maximum and is signed off by the sponsor and oversight group.

What are the review's objectives and expected benefits?

- Use the high-level aims from the idea stage to document the objectives – has anything changed?
- What is in or out of scope?
- What are the expected benefits? How do you plan to measure them?

What is your timeframe and expected deliverables?

- What are the key activities?
- How long will the review run for?
- What are the deliverables? Are there any committees you need to report to? When do they meet?
- Are there key documents to update? For example, intranet pages

What could affect the success of the review?

- Be clear on what is needed to ensure the review will run as intended, for example, will you depend on participation of stakeholders over whom you have no direct influence?

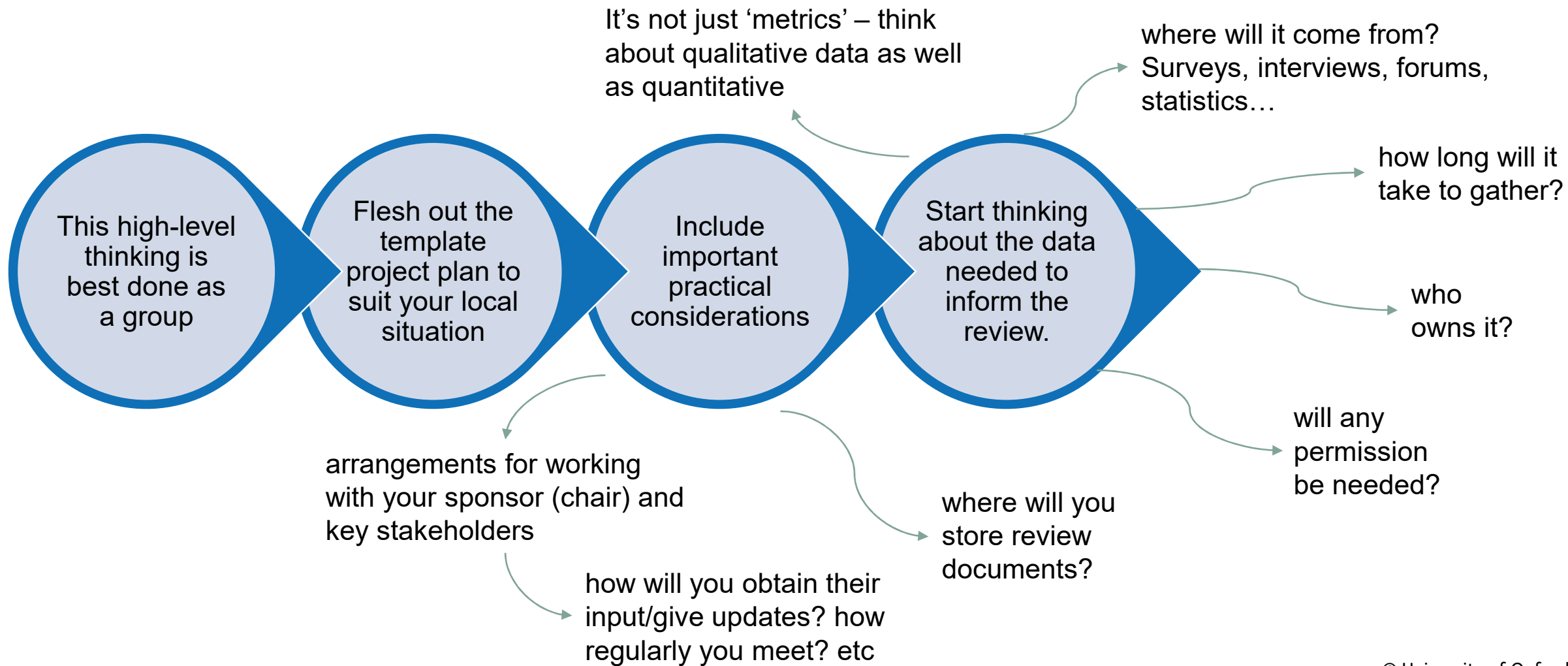### Who are your stakeholders and project team members?

Document your key stakeholders or groups and their roles on the Charter.
Include your oversight group and its members.
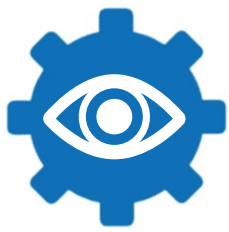Who will be on the project team and what roles will they have?

To draft a Charter, use the Charter PowerPoint template
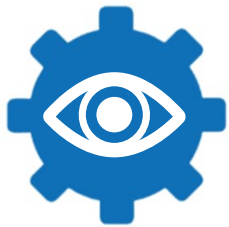
Scope 3: Planning

Think through the different stages and key activities and when they will take place.

It's not just 'metrics' – think about qualitative data as well as quantitative

where will it come from? Surveys, interviews, forums, statistics…

how long will it take to gather?

This high-level thinking is best done as a group

Flesh out the template project plan to suit your local situation

Include important practical considerations

Start thinking about the data needed to inform the review.

who owns it?

arrangements for working with your sponsor (chair) and key stakeholders

how will you obtain their input/give updates? how regularly you meet? etc

where will you store review documents?

will any permission be needed?

Scope 4: Stakeholders

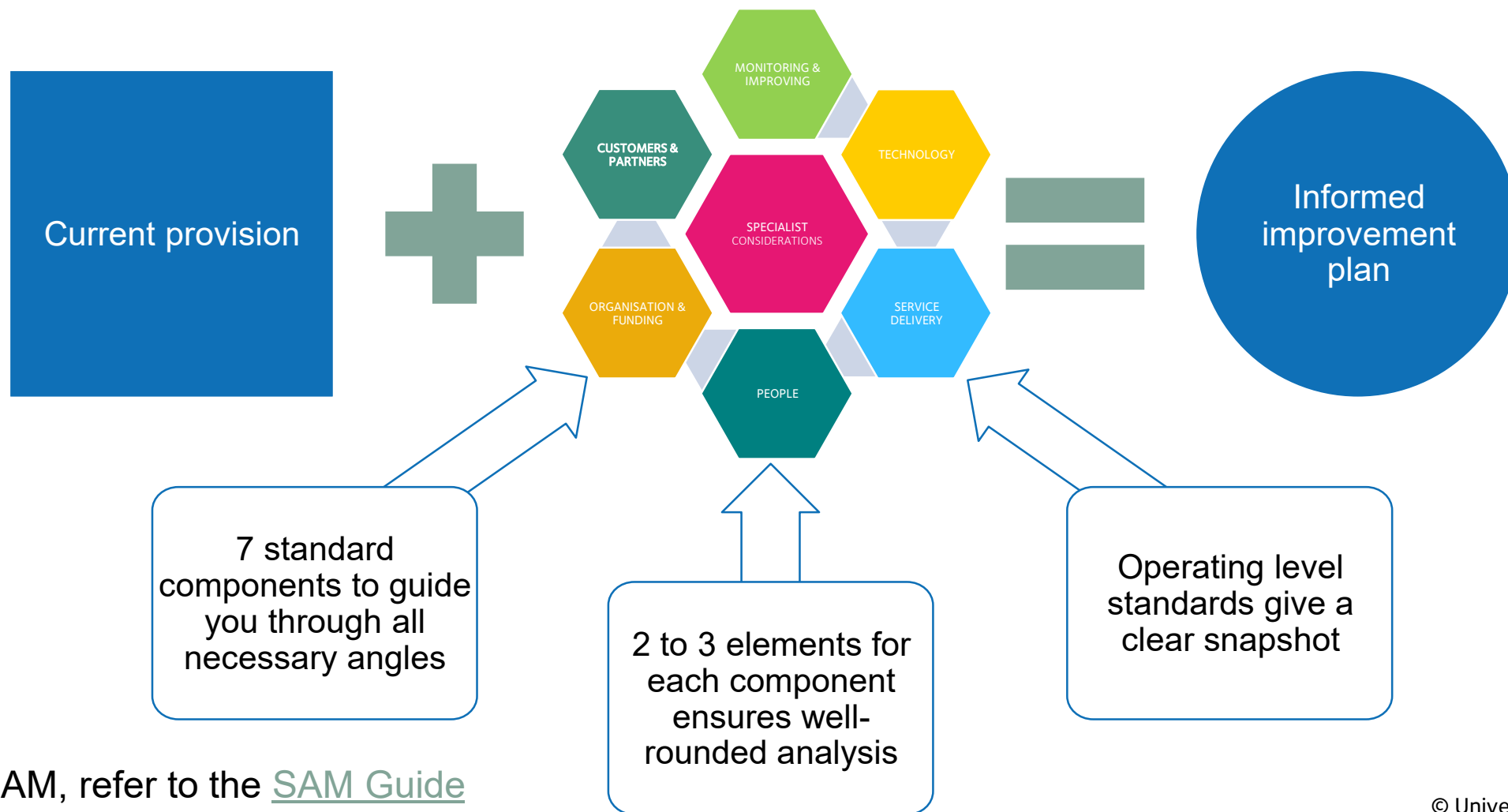Carry out a stakeholder mapping exercise to ensure that all the relevant people and groups you need to work with are identified. This will also give you a steer on how to engage with them, and be a useful starting point for the communications and engagement plan.

Who are your stakeholders? How will you engage with them?

Take time to ensure you capture all interested parties (service providers, users and owners)

Recognise the strength of their connection

Draw up a communications and engagement plan for each group (see: Engage section)

HIGH

INFLUENCE

Consult actively
Ensure these stakeholders are satisfied that their voices are being heard but avoid low-value contact so that they don't lose interest

Manage closely
Fully engage: strong buy-in is vital, so satisfy these stakeholders' concerns and use their input.

Monitor
Provide updates but don't over-communicate to avoid annoyance which could harm their support.

Maintain Interest
2-way communication: empower and engage these stakeholders, who can provide very helpful detailed input.

LOW   **INTEREST/IMPACT**   **HIGH**

Scope 5: Service assessment

Develop your understanding of current provision and benchmark your aspirations for the service, using the **Service Assessment Model (SAM)**.

Current provision +

MONITORING & IMPROVING
CUSTOMERS & PARTNERS
TECHNOLOGY
SPECIALIST CONSIDERATIONS
ORGANISATION & FUNDING
SERVICE DELIVERY
PEOPLE

= **Informed improvement plan**

7 standard components to guide you through all necessary angles

2 to 3 elements for each component ensures well-rounded analysis

Operating level standards give a clear snapshot

To use the SAM, refer to the SAM Guide

Engage 1: Communications and engagement plan

You can now begin defining appropriate approaches for each stakeholder type – this will be a continuous, not a one-off, activity in parallel with and supporting review activities, to revisit and re-apply as and when your objectives evolve and key messages emerge.

SMART objectives

What do you need to achieve through your communication?

"Promote the…"
"Ensure end users are engaged by"
"Create buy-in for the…"

Key messages

What do you want them to **know**?

What do you want them to **feel** or think?

What do you need to encourage them to **do**?

Channels

How are you going to reach them and hear from them?

What are the best channel(s) for your specific stakeholders?
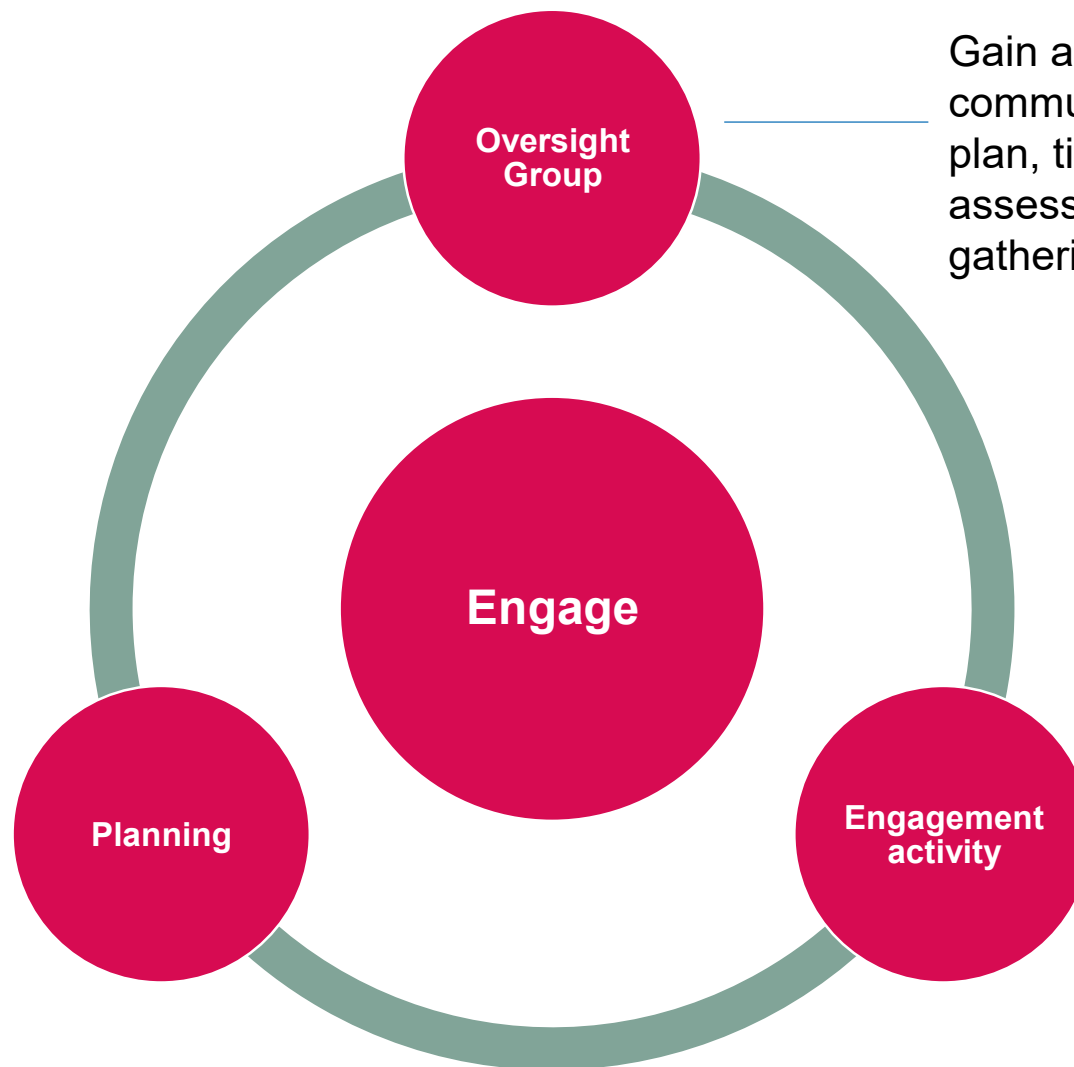
Engage

In this phase, you'll engage with all stakeholders as identified in the mapping exercise so that they are clear on the review's objectives and plans, and their part in it; you'll also prepare for the activity planned in the diagnose phase.

Engage 2

**Engage**

Oversight Group

Planning

Engagement activity

Gain agreement to the charter, the communications and engagement plan, timescales, use of the service assessment model and the data gathering approach.

Plan your approach to activity for the Diagnose phase, including data collection and individual engagement activities (interviews, workshops, surveys)

Start communicating with your stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the service review, its scope and how it will affect them.

Diagnose

The activity here is to gain a full understanding of the current state of service operations against the 7 components of the Service Assessment Model (SAM) and to gather improvement ideas. At the end of this stage you will know what is working well and where the issues are that need to be addressed. The output is a diagnose report which can be shared for feedback.
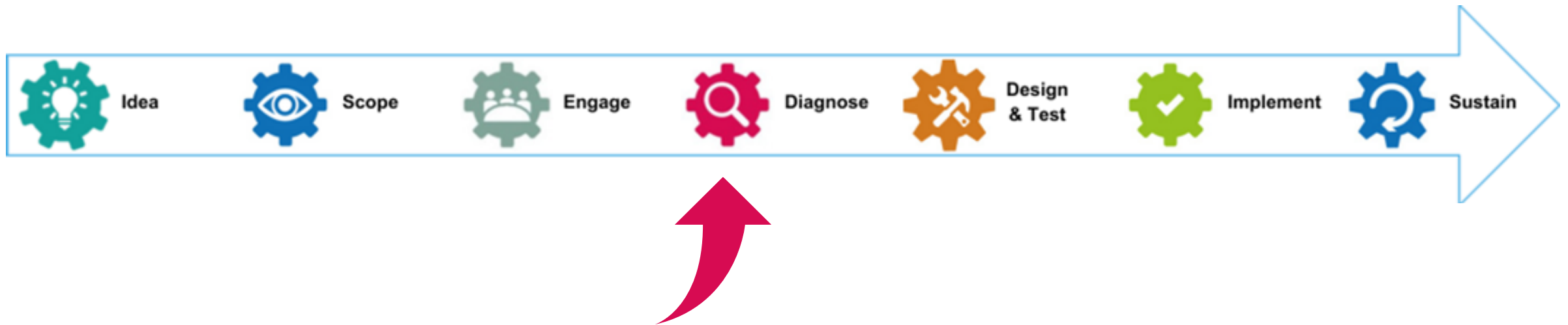
Diagnose 1

Plan your activities to gather data and insights into the current service

Hold interviews and meetings to gather viewpoints, and ask for data that is relevant to the operation of the service, for example, staff numbers, costs, timing activity, customer satisfaction etc.

Gain feedback - a workshop format is ideal, to ensure active consideration of the options. Review and gain approval of final report.

Plan activities

Gain feedback on report

Collect data & insights

Create Diagnose report

Analyse findings

Write up your findings in the diagnose report for review by your governance group and other stakeholders.

Review all the information collected to bring out common themes and assess positive feedback on the service as well as any issues raised. Analyse what the underlying causes are.

Use the SAM to baseline the current service provision. Guidance on how to do this is provided on the next slide.

Diagnose 2:
Use the SAM to assess the service

Elements

| 3 | indicators of an exemplary service |

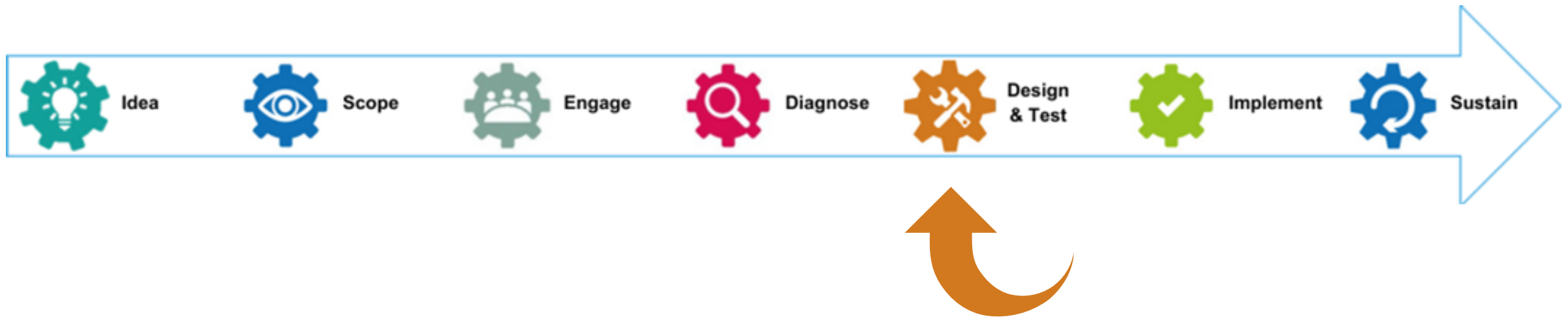| 2 | indicators of an improving/at-risk service |

| 1 | indicators of a poor service |

- Assign a score for the current service provision against each of the elements, based on the data you have collected.

- Review the scoring with your stakeholders to incorporate their perception of service standards, adjusting the Service Assessment Model (SAM) scores if appropriate.

- What do these scores show? Use this exercise together with the underlying data to identify which areas need improvement.

- Of those, where would improvements have most impact?

You have completed your assessment using the SAM and begun to consider the insights that it shows. Complete the diagnose stage by reporting to the oversight group your findings and proposing which areas should be prioritised for improvement.

Design and Test

The aim of this stage is to work with stakeholders to agree improvements and how they will work in practice so that the desired outcomes and benefits can be achieved.
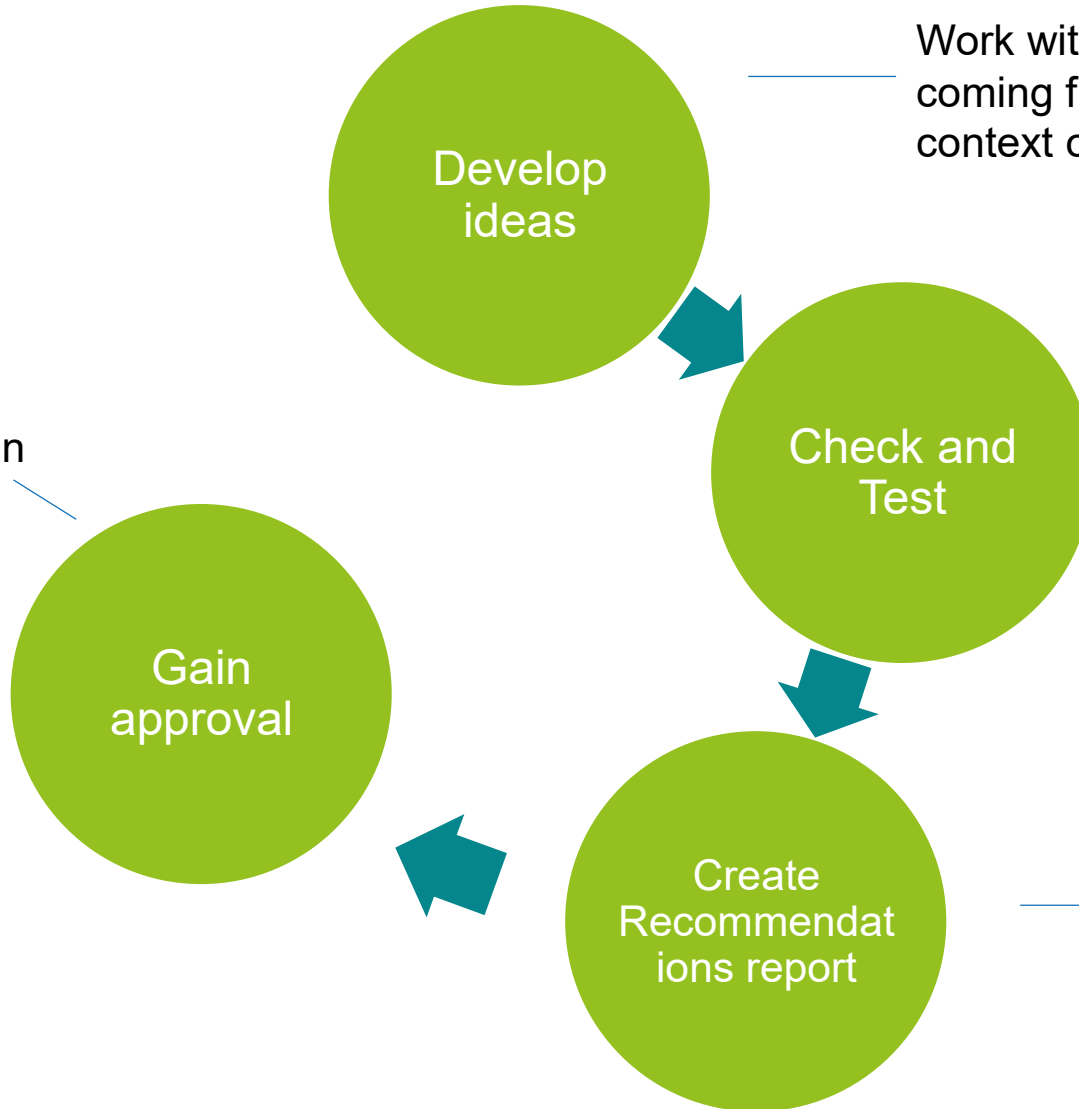
Idea Scope Engage Diagnose Design & Test Implement Sustain

Design and Test

Work with your key stakeholders to develop further the ideas coming from the diagnose phase and consider them in the context of the SAM prototype models

Gain oversight group agreement to:
- the recommendations
- a high-level implementation plan

Develop ideas

Check and Test

Check and test design ideas to ensure they meet the wider stakeholders' needs and gain their views on priorities

Gain approval

Create Recommendations report

Create recommendations report for oversight group approval
Note: If your recommendations include structural changes impacting on staff employment, please seek advice from HR

Implement

Introduce the new working practices, ensuring that all stakeholders are informed and equipped to adapt to and adopt the changes, in the interests of a positive experience for all.
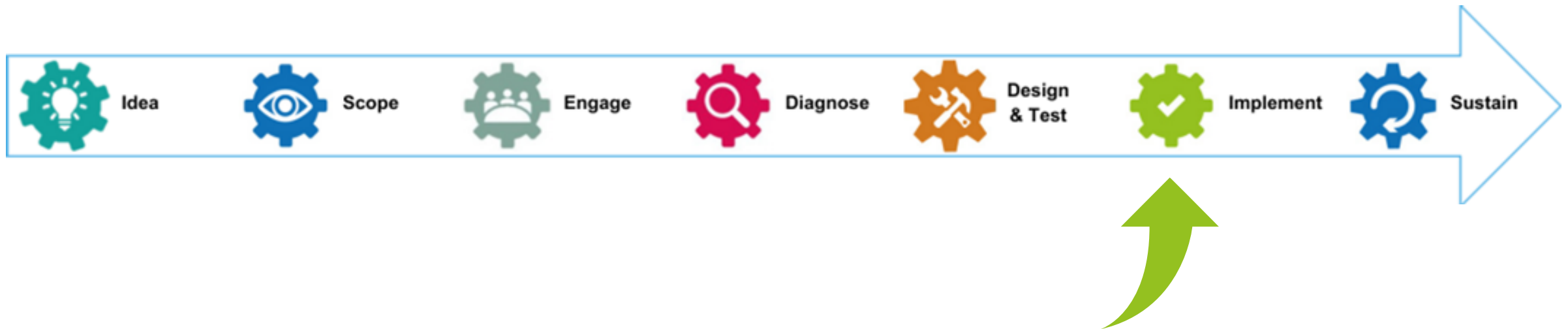
Implement

Use the Service Assessment Model (SAM) baseline and feedback from stakeholders to identify priority areas and flesh out the high-level implementation plan approved at Design and Test stage, incorporating your department or faculty's usual decision-making processes, if applicable and advice from other professional services, for example, HR or Finance. Use the service review materials to show how well tested and trialled the proposals are and how stakeholder-inclusive the process was.

Keep your stakeholders engaged: What are the anticipated impacts of the changes? How will you prepare stakeholders for the changes? Consider how the implementation plan will be communicated, the timescales for change and the resources required to meet your aspirations.

Plan benefits monitoring and KPIs, referring again to the SAM as the benchmark: how will you know and show that the changes are beneficial? Are the changes making a difference, and are they producing the expected improvements? Collect data and compare the actual results with your projected or target results. Adjustments may be needed, or the initiatives re-thought.

Hold an after-action review of the service review itself, to refine the approach for future reviews, consolidate the learning and development of those involved and draw out any lessons transferable to other aspects of professional services activity in your section and beyond – perhaps by contributing your Continuous Improvement (CI) story to a community of practice, or to a gathering of peers.
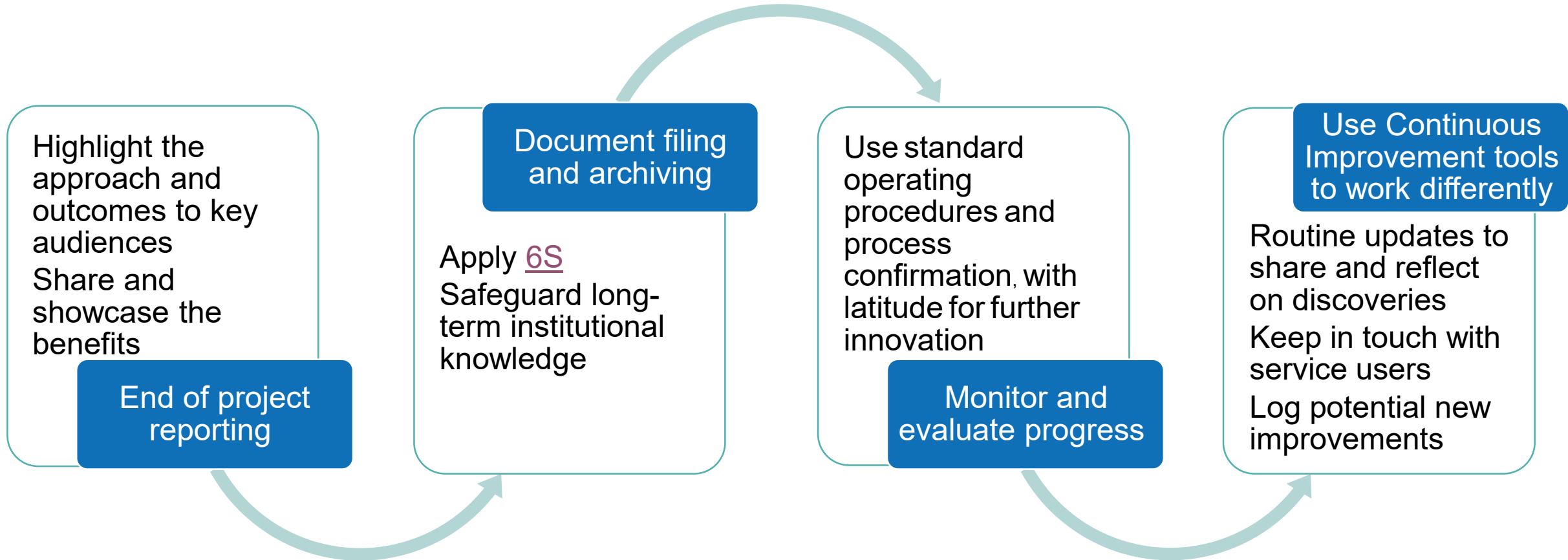
Sustain

The final phase's aim is to ensure that the new working practices are embedded into business as usual, together with adopting the Continuous Improvement (CI) approaches included in your implementation plan, the CI culture and CI mindset so that teams continue looking for ways to improve on an ongoing basis.

Sustain

Highlight the approach and outcomes to key audiences

Share and showcase the benefits

End of project reporting

Document filing and archiving

Apply 6S

Safeguard long-term institutional knowledge

Use standard operating procedures and process confirmation, with latitude for further innovation

Monitor and evaluate progress

Use Continuous Improvement tools to work differently

Routine updates to share and reflect on discoveries

Keep in touch with service users

Log potential new improvements

Checklist

Phase	Outcome	Output	Slide
Scope	Definition of the review's scope	Charter	
	Governance and project team members	Charter	
	Initial understanding of stakeholders	Stakeholder map	
	Definitions of appropriate service levels	Service Assessment Model	
	Plan for the review	Project plan	
Engage	Plan for stakeholder engagement	Communications and engagement plan	
	Agreed plan for data collection	Data plan	
Diagnose	Data gathered	Analysed data and structure for design phase	
	Plan for Design Phase	Updated project plan	
		Diagnose report (evidence)	
Design	Prototype for new service that meets the aspirational level three of the SAM	Recommendations report	
Implement	Recommendations for changes	Implementation plan	
	Changes to working practices		
	Reporting arrangements agreed		
Sustain	Progress updates	KIT plan with service users	

If you have any questions about using the Service Review Guide please email the Focus team at enquiries@focus.ox.ac.uk

If you would like any advice or guidance on getting started with your review please book a consultation meeting with the Focus team.

Visit the Focus website for more information and Continuous Improvement tools

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