

# Developing your change principles

Change principles help sharpen the approach, guide decision-making and target effort and engagement. They provide a practical framework for choices about how you engage stakeholders, communicate, manage risks, build capability, allocate resources and implement the change.

Principles are most useful when there are competing priorities that require trade-offs, the approach needs to be adjusted as information changes, or multiple initiatives interact or overlap (high change load).

A well-defined set of principles provides a clear basis for decision-making and informs the ongoing approach. This is particularly important when the approach is being revised and adjusted.

Change principles need to be considered regardless of the size and type of the project, although the amount of rigour and effort should be comparable with the scale of the change.

Keep principles short, clear and practical. For most changes, aim for three to five principles. If more are required for complex changes, group them into a clear and memorable themes.

## How to do it

Your sponsor and change team should meet and agree on a set of tailored principles that will guide the change effort. Develop principles with the type of change in mind (directive, pre-planned or adaptive (inquiry-led)) and ensure they reflect both the outcomes you need to deliver and the experience you want people to have during the transition.

Important considerations include:

- **Primary purpose:** Do you know the purpose of the change? This is the underlying driver of the change and should clearly link to the intended outcomes. Examples may include improving customer experience, delivering strategic priorities, minimising red tape, simplifying processes, standardising or tailoring services, or building a constructive culture.
- **Emotional impact:** Change will always have an emotional impact on people. How will your principles inform decision making around the people's experience, and create the right "tone" (for example, respectful, supportive and motivating)?
- **Values and integrity:** Are the change principles consistent with the values of your organisation and the South Australian public sector? This includes a focus on respect, service, professionalism, collaboration and engagement, and courage and tenacity.

Principles should be **one sentence**, easy to remember and observable in practice. If a principle is too broad to guide decisions, refine it. If you have more than five principles, group them into themes so they remain practical and usable.