

Developing your change principles

Change principles help to sharpen the approach, guide decision making, and target investment.

In most types of change, decisions need to be made quickly and with resolve. As with any other project you will need to make decisions about how you communicate with stakeholders, manage risk, invest the budget, and prioritise tasks. You will also want to know how your change project could potentially interact with other initiatives in your organisation and across the public sector to strengthen your principle-based approach.

A well-defined set of principles will provide you with the framework within which to make decisions and inform 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.

How to do it

Your team and sponsor should meet and agree on a set of tailored principles that will guide the change effort. When defining these principles, you should do so in light of the type of change you are leading or managing – directive, pre-planned or inquiring.

Important considerations include:

- **Primary purpose:** Do you know what the purpose of your change is? This is the underlying driver of a specific goal or objective. It may include such principles as improving the customer experience, delivering the strategic direction, minimising red tape, making things simpler, standardising or customising a service, or building a constructive culture.
- **Emotional impact:** Change will always have an emotional impact on participants. How will your principles inform decision making around the experience of participants, and create the right “tone” for the project (exciting, respectful, etc.)?
- **Values:** Are your change principles consistent with the values of your organisation and the public sector? These include, among others, a focus on respect, service, professionalism, collaboration and engagement, and courage and tenacity.

Try and limit the number of principles to 3-5. If you need more, group them into a few main themes that can be easily remembered. Principles should be short (one sentence), clear and measurable. Start again if they are too general and high level to be useful.



Background information to help develop your change principles

[Read about the different types of change](#)

