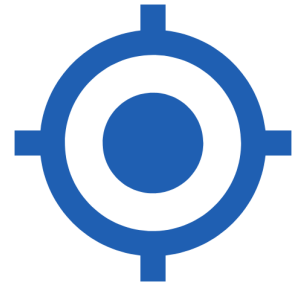


Aim statements

Why do you need them?

Any improvement project needs an aim. It keeps the project team focused and 'on the same page'. Without it projects are liable to grow or fragment as team members pull in different directions. It is your answer to **the first question in the Model for Improvement**: 'what do you want to achieve?'



What are they?

An aim statement is a **single sentence** that describes in **plain English** the **outcome you want** to see for your customer (often, but not always, the patient). Some examples:

- We want to reduce patient complaints (Surgical Directorate)
- We want to eliminate pressure ulcers on our ward (Ward A)
- We want all staff to have an agreed personal development plan (HR Department)

What they are not

Aim statements **do not include solutions**, that is actions that we undertake to achieve the outcome. If you find yourself using verbs like 'implement', 'introduce' or 'roll out' you have included a solution.

Aim statements **avoid weasel words**. Weasel words are words that have no specific, obvious and singular meaning. They bring no clear images to mind of what is meant.

Examples of weasel words

Best practice, effective, evidence-based, excellence, high quality, responsive, value-added, world class

Sensory language questions

- What will success feel like?
- What will success look like?
- What will success sound like?
- What will success smell like?
- What will success taste like?

How do you create one?

- Be clear who your customer is
- Think about the impact you want to have on them. Use the **sensory language questions** in the box to stimulate thinking
- Check you haven't let a solution creep in
- Root out those weasel words!
- Add a time frame and goal

Weasel words reference:

The Decay of Public Language, Don Watson, Random House Australia, 2003