

Glossary (adapted from King's Improvement Science, Glossary of terms [2018] http://www.kingsimprovementscience.org/)	
Abstract	A summary of a research paper
Acceptability	An implementation outcome: the perception among stakeholders that an intervention is agreeable and satisfactory
Adoption	An implementation outcome: the intention, decision, or action to try to implement an intervention
Appropriateness	An implementation outcome: the perceived fit, suitability, or relevance of an intervention in a particular setting or for a particular target audience
Baseline measures	Measurement taken prior to an intervention / prior to starting a project in order to show whether a change / intervention is needed and that the change that has been made is an improvement
Behaviour change interventions	Aimed at changing people's health behaviours, such as dietary changes or stopping smoking. These can happen at an individual, community, or population / national level
Benchmarking	A process of measuring performance according to a standard or a point of reference to make comparisons between and within organisations or interventions
Bias	Anything that distorts or affects a project, study or an intervention in a way that would alter the findings or results
Blinding	Refers to participants (and researchers) in a study not knowing what, if any, intervention the participants are receiving. This is important because it removed the potential influence this information may have
Capacity building	The development of the skills / abilities / activities / resources that are necessary in order for an organisation to thrive, expand or change direction
Case study	An in-depth exploration of a phenomenon in its natural context. For example, looking at a single patient or a group of similar patients to gain a detailed understanding of their health condition
Clinical practice guidelines	Statements that provide recommendations for how healthcare professionals should care for people with specific conditions e.g. NICE guidelines
Clinical significance	Refers to how practical or meaningful a research result is for patients and healthcare providers
Clinical trial	A research study involving human participants, intended to discover or verify the effects of a treatment e.g. a new drug
Cochrane review	A systematic review of research in healthcare and health policy. These adhere to specific stringent criteria

Context	The environment in which a project / programme / intervention takes place
Continuous quality improvement	A management approach that strives for an ongoing and constant improvement (and study) of the processes of providing healthcare services. It concentrates on improving systems rather than focusing on individuals
Co-production	An active collaboration between service providers and users of services in co-creating services where service users / recipients are involved in stages of the process
Critical appraisal	The process of systematically assessing evidence (such as findings from a research study) to judge its trustworthiness, merit and relevance in a particular context
Data	Information collected or created as part of projects, programmes and studies and can be generated in many different ways e.g. text, numbers, or images
Data analysis	A systematic process of examining, organising and processing data in order to bring out useful information and to support conclusions or decision making
Dissemination	Communication of findings (e.g. from a project or a study) to a wider audience through, for example, publications in journals, the media, social media, reports and presentations
Effectiveness	The degree of beneficial effect an intervention or procedure has under 'real world' conditions, such as in a clinical service
Efficacy	The degree to which a healthcare intervention produces a beneficial result under rigorously controlled and monitored circumstances e.g. a clinical trial
Ethics	A wide set of principles governing the design and conduct of studies or projects, including protecting people from harm
Economic evaluation	Is used to inform decisions on how budgets should be allocated between different interventions by comparing the costs and outcomes of all the options available
Evaluation	Judging or assessing the merit or worth of something
Evidence-based interventions	Practices that have been shown to be effective through research or evaluation
Feasibility	An implementation outcome: the degree to which an intervention can be carried out as planned in a particular setting or organisation
Focus group	A method to draw out the views of a group who have a common experience or an interest, under the guidance of a facilitator

Generalisability	The extent to which the results from one study produce the same results (i.e. can be replicated) in a different context or with different groups of people
Health economics	The application of economic theory that focuses on the allocation of resources in healthcare services and understanding how different stakeholders interact to make decisions on how to best spend healthcare resources
Implementation	The process of utilising / carrying out or putting something into effect in a specific setting
Innovation	Something that is novel - a product, method or an idea - that is then applied in practice and intended to generate a benefit
Inputs	The 'things' that are used in a project / programme to implement it e.g. staff, finances, equipment
Knowledge mobilisation	Efforts to move available knowledge into practice (also known as knowledge transfer or knowledge translation)
Logic model	A one-page visual representation of a project / programme that outlines the resources required and the sequence of actions thought to bring about change
Mixed methods	The combined and complementary use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in a study or project
Objectives	The steps / actions taken towards achieving a desired outcome or goal
Outcomes	The measurable changes or effects of a project / programme or intervention
Outputs	The projects which are the result of a project / programme or intervention
Patient and public engagement and involvement	Activities by which information and knowledge is provided and disseminated to the public with the goal of generating mutual benefit. It includes the active and effective involvement of users or services, carers and or the public and means working with people at all levels such as planning, delivery and monitoring. Defined as doing research 'with' people or 'by' people who use services rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them
Peer review	The critical review of work, research or ideas by other experts in the field
Pilot study	A small scale 'testing' of a particular tool, approach, or intervention before a full-scale project or study begins
Protocol	A detailed plan that clearly outlines the reasons, methods and research questions for a planned project
Qualitative data	Non-numerical information e.g. text which is gathered through qualitative research methods e.g. interviews

Quality adjusted life years	A single measure of health outcomes used in economic evaluations to reflect the impact of an intervention on an individual's length of life and health-related quality of life
Quality improvement	The combined and continual efforts of all parties to make the changes that will lead to better patient outcomes and better system performance
Quantitative data	Numerical information that is obtained through quantitative methods of data collection
Randomised controlled trial (RCT)	A type of study in which people are randomised to two or more groups to test a treatment, drug or another intervention. Groups are followed up and assessed to see how effective the intervention was, in comparison with the other group(s)
Realist evaluation	A type of evaluation that seeks to identify 'what works, for whom, in what respects, to what extent, in what context, and how?'
SMART	An acronym for remembering that the aims and objectives of a project should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant / realistic, and time-bound.
Systematic review	A type of literature review that involves systematically searching, identifying, selecting, appraising, extracting and synthesising findings from all relevant evidence (e.g. from previous relevant studies) on a particular topic
Triangulation	The use of more than one approach to answering a research question e.g. through combining different data sources
Validity	Refers to the quality of measurement in terms of whether a measure truly captures what it claims to capture
Variation	Might be appropriate e.g. when altering care to the individual needs of a specific patient or unwarranted / inappropriate such as when systems and procedures lack standardisation. Reducing unwarranted variation is at the heart of quality improvement