Continuous Improvement
Self-Assessment Matrix (CI SAM)

A standard approach to support police leaders in service-led improvement and cultural change
Contents

Foreword 3
Introduction 4
What is continuous improvement? 5
The Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix 6
  The four enablers explained 6
    Leadership 6
    Engagement 7
    Resourcing and sustainability 7
    Methodology and rigour 7
  The levels of continuous improvement culture explained 8
  Language used in CI SAM 8
Using the Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix 9
  What can CI SAM be used for? 9
  Who can use CI SAM? 9
  When should CI SAM be used? 10
  How often should CI SAM be used? 10
  Conducting the self-assessment 10
    Individual assessment 10
    Reaching consensus 11
Annex A: Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix 13
Annex B: Evidence and evaluation sheet 15
2 Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix (CI SAM)
Foreword

Nobody can improve policing better and more sustainably than the people who work in it. That is the powerful premise on which the Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix (CI SAM) is based. It is a future-oriented maturity model that recognises organisational development as a long-term cultural philosophy and values the energy of an engaged workforce in designing and delivering systematic change as a massive and potentially transformative resource.

Appreciating that the quality and openness of our change and improvement culture is largely dependent on how well we continuously engage our workforce and value their contribution to it. I am encouraged that many forces are now committed to implementing the College of Policing’s Blue-light Wellbeing framework. Together with the psychological risk management guidance, I believe these are hugely relevant to facilitating healthier levels of workforce engagement and optimising levels of resilience necessary to successfully adapt to increased reform and transformation pressures.

The College has also worked with its members and academic partners to develop a Transformation Framework which can be used alongside CI SAM. That framework provides professionals with a robust and consistent approach to developing more innovative solutions and new ways of working in delivering service transformation. It adds a critical layer of value through objective but supportive peer challenge approaches.

I commend the use of each of these tools to colleagues responsible for leading improvement. I am confident that equipping our workforce with them will help us stay focused and concentrated on delivering our purpose as we face the challenges confronting policing. The nature and scale of these are constantly changing and increasing in complexity, posing a real risk to us in terms of losing our perspective as we attempt to turn our strategic intent into reality.

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes QPM
College Chair of the Organisational Development Professional Community
Introduction

CI SAM has been developed to help make the concept of continuous improvement more accessible to the police service and to promote service-led continuous improvement and culture change.

CI SAM identifies four key enablers for continuous improvement and describes what a force would look like in terms of its attitudes and behaviours towards change as its continuous improvement culture matures. The four key enablers were identified by carrying out an evidence review of what works in organisational change and business improvement\(^1\) across all types of organisation. To ensure its relevance to the police service, College of Policing researchers used regional workshop sessions with continuous improvement practitioners to develop key features and behaviours for each of the enablers. The results of these workshops were consolidated through peer review to create CI SAM. The completed matrix builds on extensive work already taking place to embed organisational change in police forces and we will use feedback from force practitioners to refine the model over time.

CI SAM is different to an audit or inspection tool, as it is for self-assessment rather than external use. The College’s Organisational Development team can support forces with facilitation methods for the self-assessment process. For further details on this or for any other queries, please contact the team at ODfaculty@college.pnn.police.uk

What is continuous improvement?

Continuous improvement is concerned with the end-to-end review of service delivery processes. It focusses on understanding business demand, system workflows and removing non-value-adding activity to provide a high-quality, cost-effective service that is valued by the customer.

Sustainable continuous improvement is achieved by creating a positive organisational environment where every individual understands the end-to-end organisational processes within which they operate, as well as the value of their individual contribution to those processes, and is encouraged and supported in identifying and influencing change as a key part of their day-to-day activity.

A useful litmus test of an organisation’s level of maturity in having embedded a continuous improvement culture is to ask people in the organisation, ‘Who makes sure services are being improved for the public?’ What would their answer be?

- A response such as, ‘Improving services? You’re joking – we’re just trying meet budget reductions,’ would indicate an organisation at the beginning of its continuous improvement change cycle.

- A response such as, ‘It’s the project team, they’re working on XXX,’ would indicate at least some level of continuous improvement maturity.

- A response such as, ‘I do,’ would indicate an organisation which has integrated continuous improvement into its day-to-day work.
The Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix

The aims of CI SAM are to:

- clearly show what is accepted by practitioners as good practice to achieve a sustainable continuous improvement culture
- help forces identify their own areas of strength, as well as areas for improvement
- allow forces to benchmark their current continuous improvement capability and plan which areas they will develop as part of their business change planning
- encourage peer support, matching those forces with something to share to those with something to learn.

The CI SAM matrix is available in Annex A. It is a way of describing improvement activity or processes as four key enablers of successful and sustainable organisational change, set against graded levels of continuous improvement culture.

The four enablers explained

The four enablers were identified by carrying out an evidence review of what works in organisational change and business improvement across all types of organisation. They represent a condensed form of the seven original continuous improvement programme principles and are:

**Leadership**

Including the continuous improvement principles of:

- **Leadership**
  
  Top-level engagement, openness and active participation. Removing blame and encouraging staff to identify issues to be rectified in accordance with the organisation's strategic imperative/objectives.

- **Governance and interoperability**
  
  Identifying a senior responsible owner at NPCC-level lead for programme with ongoing responsibility for delivery. This is essential to link continuous improvement with ongoing/new force programmes.
Engagement

Including the continuous improvement principles of:

■ **Focus on the customer**

  Insightfully using a comprehensive understanding of what customers need and value to drive transformational change in organisational culture, to focus on the customer and resolve problems which undermine their quality of life and drive demand for service.

■ **Engagement with the business**

  Ensuring that all areas of the force are engaged, with significant focus on front-line staff, the office of the police and crime commissioner and staff associations.

Resourcing and sustainability

Including the continuous improvement principle of:

■ **Resourcing and sustainability**

  Identifying and selecting the right people with the right skills to understand and deliver the desired outcomes. Developing a core team to remain in place to embed methodology and lessons learnt.

Methodology and rigour

Including the continuous improvement principles of:

■ **Outcomes and benefits**

  Clearly identifying and communicating desired goals and outcomes. Explaining performance, financial and efficiency targets to improve public confidence.

■ **Methodology and rigour**

  Adhering to the principles of the ‘top-down, bottom-up’ approach. Evidencing use of data to support developments, problem solving and outcomes.
The levels of continuous improvement culture explained

Generally, models of this kind run from level 1 (basic level or, in this case, ‘marginal’) to level 5 (top level or ‘integral’). Organisations often use such models to improve performance and introduce common understanding of terms and standardisation of an activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Characterised in practice as...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Forces where improvement efforts are one-off, with continuous improvement perceived as a fad that hasn’t worked or wouldn’t work in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Forces that tend to think about improvement in response to a crisis or external stimulus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Process-focused</td>
<td>Forces where projects are the main focus. Delivery is likely to be cost or process rather than quality-focused – how many or how much, rather than how well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Forces that place a high value on improvement, actively invest in continuous improvement projects and programmes and are always on the lookout for areas to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Integral</td>
<td>Forces where continuous improvement is a way of life and embedded in everything staff do, from the frontline to senior managers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language used in CI SAM

Staff refers to all employees of the police force, including officers and non/partially warranted staff such as special constables or volunteers.

Stakeholders refers collectively to three key groups that include staff, the public and partner agencies.
Using the Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix

What can CI SAM be used for?

There are many ways in which CI SAM can be used. Some of these are:

- facilitate reflection on the service improvement culture of an organisation and/or team
- help a team recognise that continuous improvement and organisational change are complex, multidimensional concepts
- stimulate discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of how a team and/or organisation approaches organisational change
- reveal any differences in perception between different staff/officer/rank groups
- help understand how an organisation and/or team with a more (or less) developed approach to continuous improvement might look
- help evaluate specific interventions needed to improve services provided by an organisation and/or team.

CI SAM is not designed to be used:

- for performance management or external assessment purposes
- to apportion blame
- to be an end in itself.

Who can use CI SAM?

CI SAM is a flexible, multi-purpose tool that can be used by boards, senior management teams, organisational development teams, operational teams and others who would like to consider approaches to service improvement in their organisation, team or business area.
When should CI SAM be used?

CI SAM can be used to raise awareness among police officers and staff about continuous improvement in general terms. It is not specifically designed to be applied after a problem has been identified, although this is one of its potential uses. Rather, the scope of the framework is broader, as it aims to promote consideration about service improvement among police staff and officers and identify opportunities for development.

How often should CI SAM be used?

Using CI SAM annually will give sufficient time to develop and implement any improvements. By revisiting it at regular intervals, it is possible to chart progress in developing a strong improvement culture. Overuse may lead to staff becoming disengaged and disillusioned. It takes time to develop a strong continuous improvement culture – it doesn’t happen overnight.

Conducting the self-assessment

CI SAM is designed to be used in a self-reflection and development context, involving different teams across the organisation. For a force, this should include chief officer teams. All team members should use it and teams can be selected at various organisational levels to gain an understanding of how different departments, ranks and grades perceive the organisation’s continuous improvement culture.

Individual assessment

Using the CI SAM matrix in annex A, individuals privately, without discussion, evaluate either their team or organisation depending on what has been agreed. If it has been agreed to evaluate the organisation and team, then it is recommended to carry out a separate assessment for each.

For each of the four enablers, each individual should select the description that they think best fits the organisation or team. Individuals should indicate their chosen level for each enabler on the evaluation sheet, using annex B, and provide evidence to support their conclusion. This will give an indication of the current continuous improvement culture profile for the organisation or team from that individual’s perspective.
The descriptions in each of the levels are not designed to be a precise measure of the organisation’s culture and should not be used as a checklist, but as examples of the type of behaviours expected at that level. Individuals may recognise some features at one level and some at another. In this instance, it is helpful to think about the ‘best fit’ or dominant level, along with recognition that they may have elements from another level.

For example, an organisation might display all the features of level 4 leadership, with one or two specifics from level 5. In this instance, they could be described as ‘level 4 with level 5 features’. This could then stimulate a discussion about what might need to happen to move the organisation towards level 5.

**Reaching consensus**

Individuals can be brought together in appropriate groups for a facilitated discussion to moderate the results and see if they can reach a consensus.

Consider the overall picture of the force and/or team. The emerging profile is unlikely to be uniform and this will enable leaders to gain a greater understanding of the continuous improvement culture across the organisation, where there are strengths and where there are areas for improvement. CI SAM can support ongoing development through reference to the descriptors at each level so that leaders can reflect on why the organisation is where it is and how it can progress to a higher level.

The College’s Organisational Development team can support forces with facilitation methods for the self-assessment process. For further details on this or for any other queries, please contact the team at **ODfaculty@college.pnn.police.uk**
### Annex A: Continuous Improvement Self-Assessment Matrix

#### Level 1: Marginal

- Improvement practitioners are expected to improve activity around the ‘day job’
- Little investment is made in leadership or resources and turnover is high
- The lack of adequate support for CI practitioners weakens the reputation of the staff and the work, making it difficult to mount formal CI projects
- CI work tends to be task-focused, with no alignment to a longer-term CI strategy
- Analytical skills are not recognised as integral to the success of CI, undermining the team’s capability to adopt a rigorous approach
- No formal mechanisms for capturing lessons and sharing knowledge exist. Learning is sporadic at best.

#### Level 2: Reactive

- Improvement practices are being carried out, but without a systematic approach.
- There is a lack of understanding of the CI process.
- Staff are not engaged in the CI process.
- CI is not an integral part of the day-to-day work.
- CI is not seen as a formal part of the organisation.

#### Level 3: Process-focused

- A central CI team has been established.
- CI is used to develop and improve practice.
- CI shows signs of becoming part of the culture.
- CI is used to support improvement activities.
- CI is used to support change management.

#### Level 4: Proactive

- CI is used to support change management.
- CI is used to develop and improve practice.
- CI is used to support improvement activities.
- CI is used to support change management.

#### Level 5: Integral

- CI is a core part of the organisation.
- CI is used to support change management.
- CI is used to develop and improve practice.
- CI is used to support improvement activities.
- CI is used to support change management.
## Annex B: Evidence and evaluation sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabler</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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About the College

We’re the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.

college.police.uk