

Writing service improvement case studies

A number of organisations use service and quality improvement case studies to demonstrate real-life implementation of evidence and guidelines in health and social care, promote best practice, highlight actions that others can learn from, and celebrate excellence.

This is a great opportunity for allied health professionals to profile improvement work, often to a wider audience, and support wider adoption of evidence-based care. These top tips will help you to write and share an award-winning case study.

Tip 1 - Read the guidance

Most organisations will have guidance for writing case studies - read this first. It will outline what is expected and what to include, and may include scoring criteria. This will help you know what to focus on and self-assess what you have written.

Tip 2 - Look at other examples

A number of organisations publish service improvement case studies on their websites. Look at a range of examples for ideas about what makes a useful and compelling case study in different styles and formats.

Tip 3 - Choose a good title

Your title should be short, understandable and grab your reader's attention; ideally stating the focus and benefits of your initiative, for example *'Behaviour change: enabling Allied Health Professionals to have healthy conversations'* or *'Improving educational resources for people with back pain in Sheffield'*.

Tip 4 - Demonstrate patient and public involvement

Service improvements should focus on improving patient care, outcomes and experience. Throughout your case study, include how you have worked with patients and used patient feedback in your improvement work.

Tip 5 - Know your audience

Think about who will be reading your case study and keep this audience in mind while writing it, including their strategic priorities. Service case studies need to inform and influence people outside of our own professions and specialities, and awards panels frequently include judges who are not AHPs.

Tip 6 - Keep it simple

Many organisations publish their case studies online. Sticking to some of these principles makes it easier to read content on a screen:

- Don't be afraid to use bullet points to help keep things concise and easy to follow.
- Use plain English, short sentences and paragraphs, and limit the use of capital letters.
- Don't use jargon, complicated abbreviations or underlining.

Tip 7 - Describe why and how you did it

Describe clearly the aim and main objectives of your improvement work. Outline how the project was implemented, including overcoming any barriers. Write this in an easy to follow and step-by-step format that others can use and build on. Relate this clearly to quality improvement and/or implementation science where relevant.

Tip 8 - Demonstrate the 'so what'

Use quantitative and qualitative data and evidence to demonstrate the impact of your service improvement work, including patient outcomes, patient and staff experience, efficiency and productivity. This should also include whether you achieved your initial aims and objectives; and any insights on what went well, and what you would do differently next time.

Tip 9 - Find a critical friend

Ask a colleague who is not involved in your improvement work to read your case study. They are much more likely to spot any mistakes and ask questions; and if they are asking, it is likely a reviewer would too. This will help you make sure your case study is clear and concise.

Tip 10 - Share it widely

Once you have finished your case study, share it widely. It is also likely to be relevant for more than one audience, website or publication - find other places to submit it. You can also use it to [write a conference abstract](#), and to support your CPD portfolio, appraisals and job applications.

For contact details about your local hub and for further information about **cahpr** please visit our website <http://cahpr.csp.org.uk/>

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