Quality Improvement Toolkit

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Tool 8: Cause and effect / Fishbone diagram

Project Name:	
Project Lead:	

1. Why?

A common challenge is determining what changes you can test to improve a process.

2. How?

A cause and effect diagram is an organisational tool that helps teams explore and display the many causes contributing to a certain effect or outcome. It will display a graphic of the relationship between causes and their effects, helping to identify areas for improvement.

3. Steps involved

Sample template fishbone diagram

- 1. Write the effect you wish to influence in the box on right hand side.
- 2. Decide on five categories of causes for the effect. See some standard categories below.
- For each category generate a list of the causes that contribute to the effect (branch bones). Asking 'Why' should help develop causes.

People Environment Effect Materials Methods Equipment