Competencies for Change and Improvement Practitioners

The following are the main competencies needed to support service improvements and manage change effectively. When working with change teams, it is having all these competencies (or the lack of) across the team that makes the difference.

- ▶ **Analytical thinking** – the ability to understand and comfortably use employee, quality standards, financial, performance and any other service/clinical data that is relevant.

- ▶ **Business thinking** – the ability to understand the wider health and social care context within which the organisation is operating and the opportunities that change presents.

- ▶ **Communication** – the ability to speak and write in ways that are straightforward, easy to understand and compelling.

- ▶ **Handling ambiguity** – the ability to make sense of (and help others make sense of) what is going on when there is uncertainty and absence of a clear pathway.

- ▶ **Handling complexity** – the ability to understand and work with various organisational systems, particularly where other services/organisations might be affected by the change.

- ▶ **Influence, persuasion and negotiation** – the ability to get the majority of people on board, adopting a 'win-win' approach.

- ▶ **Managing relationships** – the ability to build and maintain relationships with a wide range of people from all levels and parts of the organisation through effective engagement / co-production approaches and methodologies.

- ▶ **Addressing conflict** – the ability to work with teams/services to openly address conflict, find common ground/interests, explore solutions and seek resolutions.

- ▶ **Planning and organising** – the ability to ensure you and whoever else you're working with to deliver the change get the right things done at the right time.

- ▶ **Resilience** – the ability to handle whatever is thrown at you (but not be a pushover), bounce back and not take things personally.

- ▶ **Strategic thinking** – the ability to keep the 'big picture' in mind and focus on the outcome to be achieved.

- ▶ **Consultancy skills** – the ability to analyse problems, guide and support managers and teams to address complex issues and find workable solutions.

- ▶ **Human centred design** – the ability to use human centred design thinking/ practices to influence and shape how services are improved or developed, co-creating solutions and testing options for delivery with the service user in mind.

- ▶ **Knowledge of improvement/change methods** – the ability to use improvement/ change methodologies based on assessment of need, enabling others to become self sufficient and build capacity for change and improvement across the system.

Adapted from: Lewis, H. (2017b)
People's Needs Defining Change – Health Services Change Guide