Template 6.2.1: SWOT Analysis
(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats/Challenges)

Purpose

A SWOT analysis assists in understanding why we need to change. The main principle underlying SWOT is that internal and external factors must be considered simultaneously when identifying aspects of an organisation that need to be changed. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organisation, while opportunities and threats are external. An analysis of the organisation and the external environment will enable the organisation/service to plan more effectively for the future, while taking into account opportunities and potential threats.

How to use it?

▶ Evaluate your service by identifying and considering its current strengths and weaknesses and the threats and opportunities facing it in the future.

▶ Strengths and weaknesses are primarily about the organisation's present situation, and opportunities and threats are about predicting its future (external factors).

▶ Based on the data, how can you build on the strengths and lever the opportunities?

▶ How can you deal with weaknesses and minimise threats/challenges?

STRENGTHS What the service is good at doing?

WEAKNESSES What the service is not good at doing?

OPPORTUNITIES Identify the events and trends that are favourable.

THREATS (CHALLENGES) Identify the events or trends that are unfavourable.

Conducting a swot analysis – additional guidance

A strategic analysis of the organisation and the external environment will enable the organisation to plan more effectively for the future, while taking into account opportunities and potential threats. The following key questions provide a basis for this analysis.

What are your organisation's/service's strengths and weaknesses?

For example
▶ What strengths are in the organisation that can lever/enable the change?
▶ What are its main achievements over the last three years?
▶ How successful has it been in achieving its strategic objectives?
▶ Has it met or exceeded its targets?
▶ Do current services meet users' requirements?
▶ How effective are its links with other key organisations/agencies in its area or sector?
▶ How secure is your organisation's financial position?
▶ Does it have the staffing/volunteer levels and expertise necessary to meet its objectives?
▶ How is your organisation/service regarded externally? Does it have a good reputation?
▶ Is it able to build effective relationships with those it wishes to influence?
▶ Where are there strong alliances/relationships/partnerships which could assist in levering change both internal and external to the organisation?
▶ Is your organisation/service effective at communicating with internal teams and external groups?
▶ How effective are its management systems and processes? Is your organisation/service well-structured and efficient or overly bureaucratic?
▶ Does its governance arrangements have the capacity/expertise to meet the demands of the organisation/service?
▶ What areas of good practice or innovation are relevant to the change that can be repeated across the system? Examples may include Quality Initiatives (PDSAs). Are there opportunities to build on area/local level initiatives?

What are the key opportunities and threats facing your organisation?

▶ Trends in its area of work/services
▶ Audit of local situation
▶ User needs
▶ Demographics
▶ Competition from other or similar organisations in its area
▶ Facilities
▶ Barriers to your organisation's development
▶ Deprivation of its catchment area
▶ Consultation findings, e.g. community audit, needs assessment
▶ Opportunities for developing new areas of work
▶ Opportunities for extending services to new client groups
▶ Partnerships/collaborative working opportunities
▶ Local authority policies and plans in its area
▶ Policy documents relevant to your organisation's work or location
▶ Funding opportunities for your organisation/service

Additional analysis

Ask further questions about each of the factors listed under the four headings.
For **strengths** and **weaknesses** the questions asked are:
1. What are the consequences of this? Do they help or hinder your service/organisation in achieving its core purpose?
2. What are the causes of this strength (or weakness)?

For **opportunities** and **threats** the questions are slightly different:
1. What impact is this likely to have on your service/organisation? Will it help or hinder it in achieving its core purpose?
2. What must it do to respond to this opportunity or threat?

Reflect on the core purpose of the service and on all four components. Pay particular attention to the causes of the strengths and weaknesses, and to the responses required to the opportunities and threats. Link together common threads into a set of priorities for the team to address.