# PROBLEM STATEMENT

## Diagnostics



ACI Redesign Methodology

### Problem statement

Problem statements are clear concise descriptions summarising the issues that need to be addressed going into the solutions phase.

### Diagnostics

The purpose of this phase is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state from different perspectives. Once you know the issues you can prioritise them and establish the root causes, so you develop the right solutions.

## Key points

### 1. Evidence based problems

At the beginning of the redesign project, you would have set a goal and objectives and had an initial case for change. When the diagnostics phase is complete, you will have clearer, evidence-informed understanding of the problems that must be solved. It is then time to form your problem statement/s, which you will take forward to redesign.

### 2. Make it clear

Problem statements should be clear, concise statements summarising the issues identified in the diagnostics phase. For example: There is no agreed process for booking patients into the clinic. The problem statement must relate to the goal and objectives. If it doesn't, ask your team and sponsor if you have gone off track or if the goal or objectives should change in light of the evidence you found.

### 3. Explain the impact of the problem

Completion of a thorough diagnostics phase should provide you with the information you need to explain and quantify the impact of this problem on:

- patients/ consumers – access, experience and/or quality impacts
- staff – experience, delays, variation in care delivery, workflow
- the service (e.g. ward or dept) – meeting KPIs, costs, efficiency and effectiveness.

### 4. Revisit your case for change

Now that you have this information, you will be able to write a stronger and more specific case for change, and be able to shape it to different stakeholders' frames of reference. Having validated qualitative and quantitative data about your specific service (that stakeholders have been engaged in collecting) will go a long way to identifying and agreeing on effective solutions.

## Considerations and tips

A good problem statement is based on evidence and clearly highlights the exact issue you intend to address.

### Effective statements

A good problem statement should be clear to the audience and written simply, without jargon or abbreviations. Once agreed upon, supporting information needs to be provided and the problem statements need to be tested with stakeholders. This will inform you if your statement and supporting evidence are being communicated effectively.

### Avoid blame

Problem statements need to be factual, based on the processes or issues you found. They are not about identifying teams or individuals who are involved. Usually problems arise due to poor or outdated processes in a changing environment. Performance issues should be managed separately by the sponsor.

### Be creative

Problem statements need to be written, but they can also be communicated visually using diagrams, graphs, photographs or videos. Using images help you to communicate to a range of stakeholders and get your message across more effectively.

### Non-prioritised problems

During the prioritisation phase of diagnostics, some problems may have been `parked'. Work with your steering committee to decide what should happen with these issues, and communicate this to your stakeholders. For example, some issues may be assigned to other teams or actually be negated if you solve the prioritised issues.

## Evidence based problem statement

**Problem Statement**

**Evidence**
- diagnostic data

**Impact**
- consumers
- staff
- service

**Visual cues**
- pictures
- graphs

## What impact does the problem have?
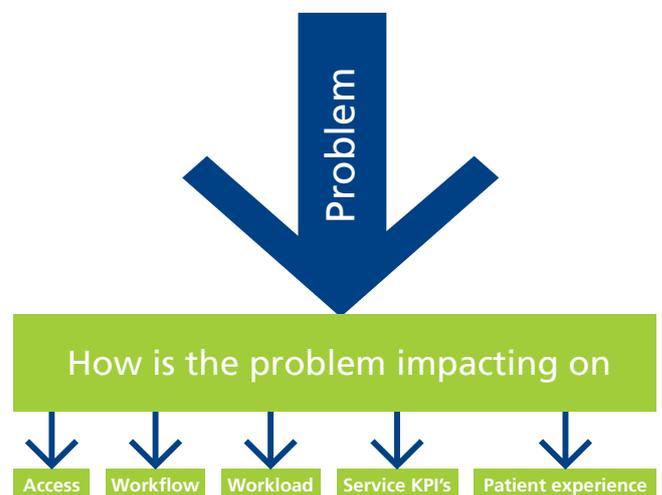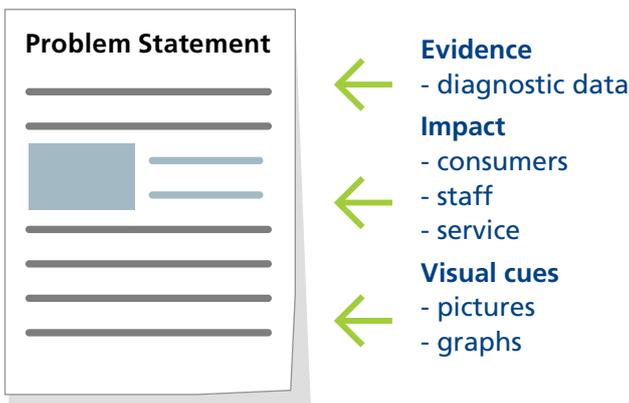
Problem

How is the problem impacting on

Access · Workflow · Workload · Service KPI's · Patient experience

## Further information

## Next steps

Now that you have well developed problem statements that are supported by evidence, you are ready to move to the solutions phase. Take a moment with your team to celebrate the end of diagnostics and the substantial work you have done to date.