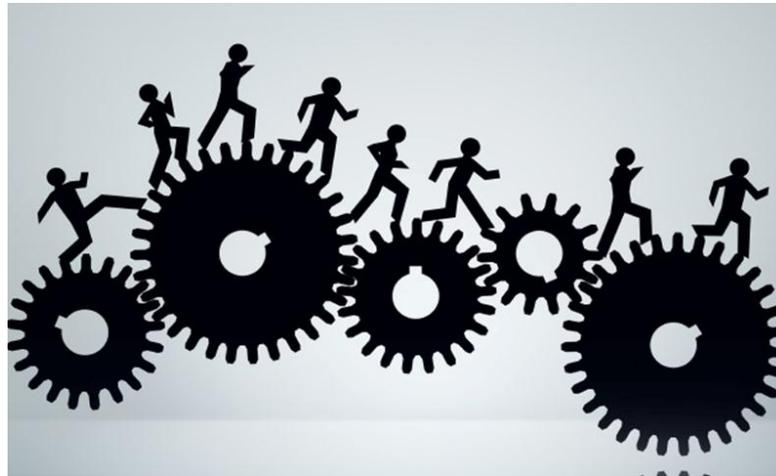# Process Mapping Guide

Understanding Systems and Processes

How can Process Mapping help us?

Process mapping enables us to clearly and simply **record** existing processes, **examine** them thoroughly and **develop** improvements by:

- Eliminating unnecessary tasks
- Clarifying roles within the process
- Reducing delays and duplication
- Reducing the number of staff or steps required to achieve a task or goal

It can also assist in the creation and implementation of an effective process, often in partnership with team, departments or other agency, by:

- Identifying areas of duplication
- Agreeing common processes
- Improving or changing processes
- Achieving maximum effectiveness in operations

Why Process Map?

Making system changes without truly understanding how the process is working today, and why, can lead to costly mistakes and wasted efforts.

It can also create conditions that make it difficult for staff to work effectively, and often create further problems.

If you do not measure a process, you will not be able to manage it effectively and if you cannot manage a process, you cannot improve it.

It can be estimated that people working in organisations can waste about 15 – 20% of their time by re-doing things that are wrong, chasing things without result, querying incomplete instructions, doing other people's jobs etc.

Process mapping enables us to clearly define and understand the current processes in a visual form, identifying problem areas such as bottlenecks, capacity issues, delays or waste. Once identified, this knowledge provides a solid basis from which to develop solutions and introduce and plan new improved processes.

Types of Process Map

There are two basic types of chart that you may find useful:

Process Flowchart

This chart simply sets out the sequence of activities and decision points. These are useful for capturing the initial detail of the process. Labeling additional information for each step such as staff grade/type, department and physical location of each step can be helpful.
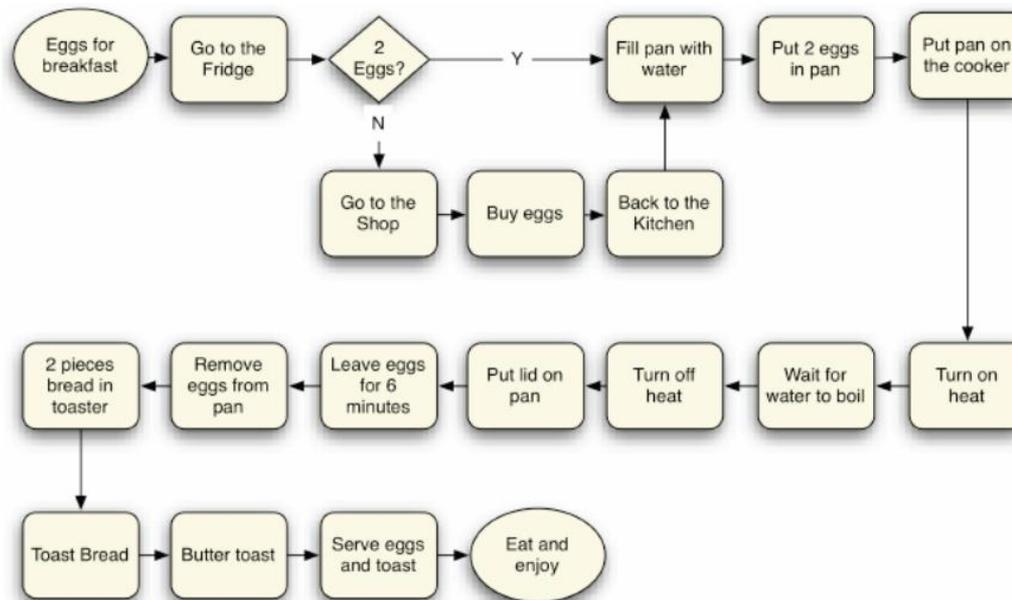

Example of process steps to boiling eggs

Types of Process Map

Deployment Flowchart (Swim lane Diagram)

This shows who does what along with the interactions between people and departments (e.g. Patient and GP). This is sometimes known as a "swim lane" chart as the page is divided into lanes showing the various actions and how the process moves from person to person, or agency to agency.
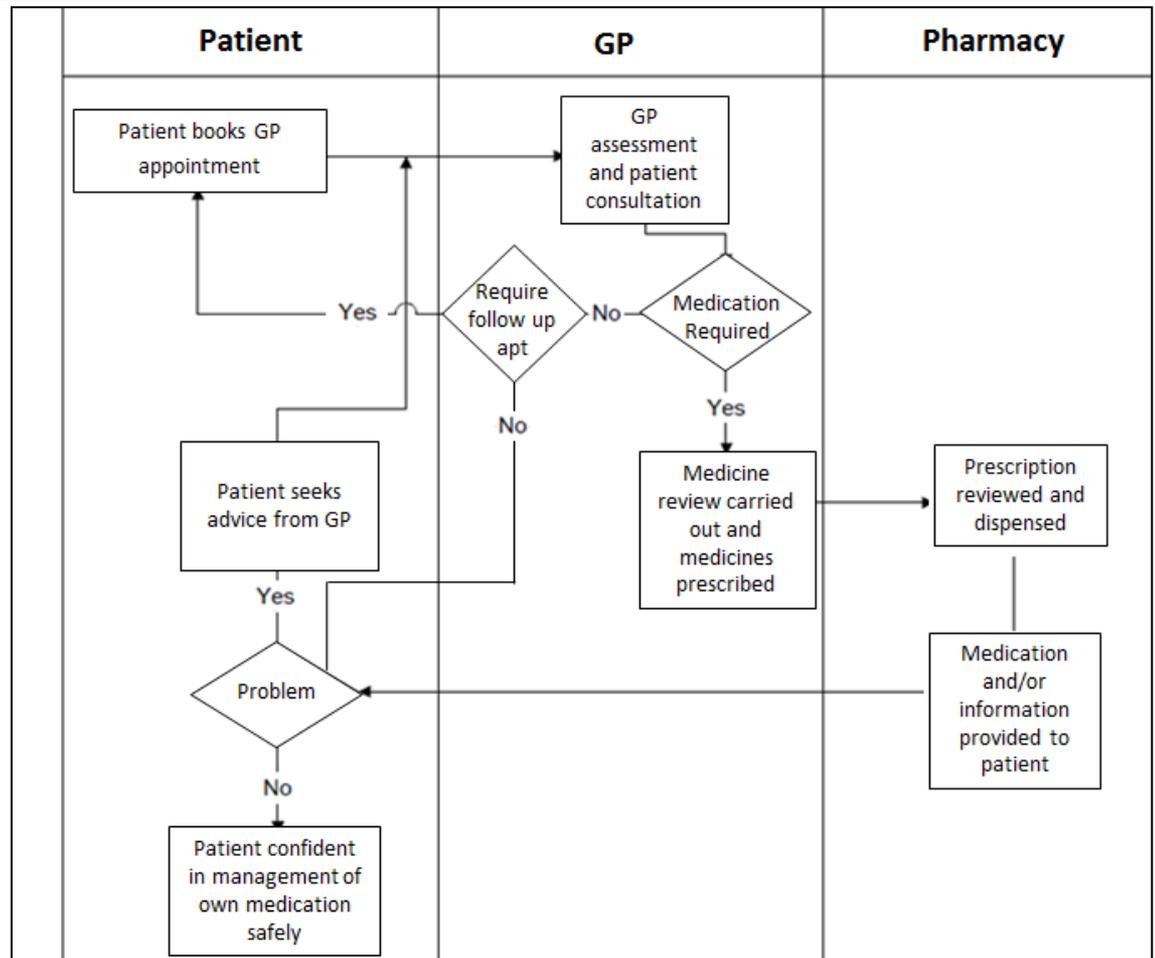
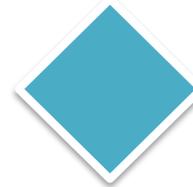*Example of a prescribing process and area of activity*

Basic Flowcharting symbols

The two most important symbols are:

a) A rectangle, representing an activity or task:

b) A diamond, representing a decision:

c) You may also find it useful, when considering process improvement to label certain actions on your chart to highlight –

Delays:

Transport/movement:

Storage/Filing:

Analysing your Process Maps

Once you are confident you have mapped out your current system or process using either or both mapping methods and have clearly articulated the who, what, when, and how for each step you can begin analysing your results.

You should then ask the following questions for each step of you process or system:

- Is this step performing as it should?
- Why are we doing it?
- Is it essential to do this?
- Is there a better way of doing it?

In doing so you should also consider:

- The Implication of not doing parts of the process:
- Impact on Customers/Stakeholders/Patient
- Why we needed the old process?
- What do we want to change?
- What are the requirements of a new process?
- What needs to change?
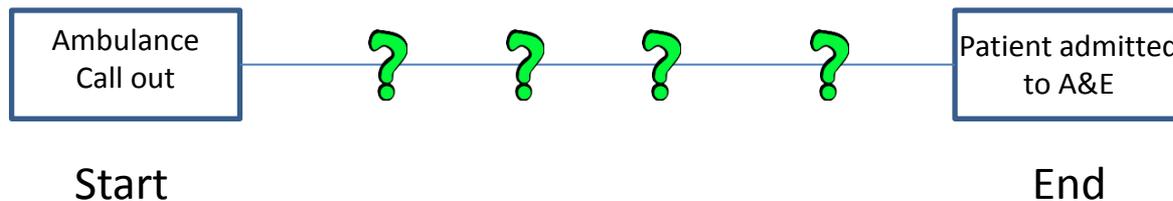
Helpful hints and tips

Define you process

- Before you start be sure to define the starting point and the end point of the process you are going to map. Some interventions or pathways can have multiple processes undertaken by different teams or departments so be sure to identify and define each separate process.

E.g. A patient being admitted to hospital has many different process

Process one – Patient brought to hospital by ambulance
Process two – Patient admitted to A&E
Process three – Patient assessed by triage team
Process four – Patient transferred to medical ward

Each of these processes will have a starting point and an end point linking it to the next process with multiple steps in between.

| Ambulance Call out | ? ? ? ? | Patient admitted to A&E |

Start   End

Helpful hints and tips

Get the right people involved

- When mapping out a process it is important to have all the people actually involved in the process present as they will have key information and content expertise on the steps they are involved in. If you get to a step and you feel you don't know enough about how it works or how it is performed then you need to find out from the people involved in it to build your understanding.

Explore the intricacies and details of each step

- If you aim is to really understand the system or process try not to just label high level steps. Break each step down into its key components to truly understand it.

Eg. Booking an appointment
- ➢ Who does it?
- ➢ Where is it done?
- ➢ How is it done?
- ➢ What are the logical steps within this step?
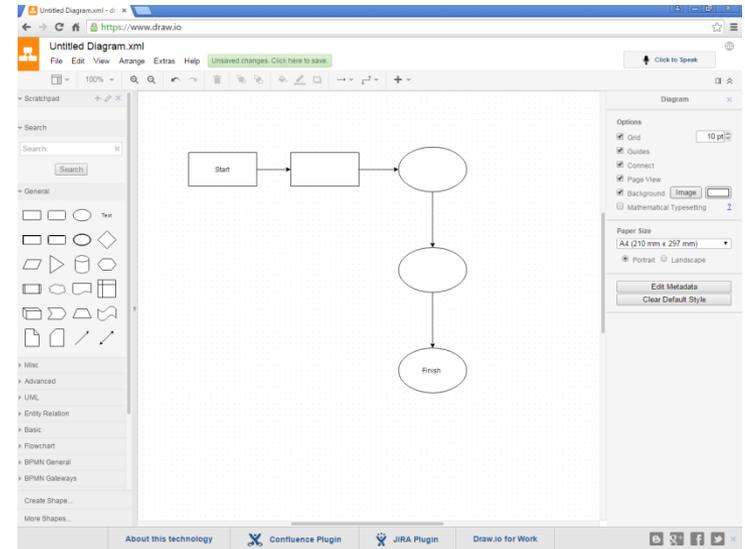
Helpful hints and tips

Get Mapping!
- There are two great ways to map out a process or system. The first is to simply use a wall and 'post it' notes. This allows you to easily add, take away or rearrange steps until you are happy with your process. It also give your mapping team space to gather round and contribute information.
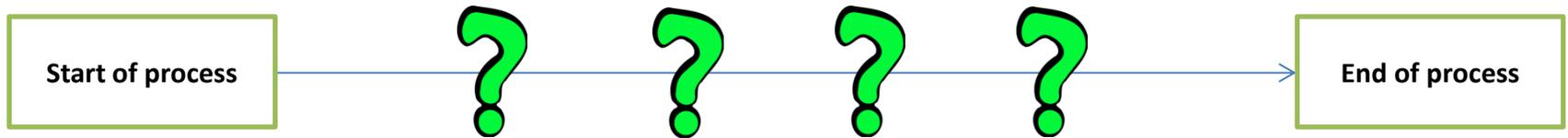

- You can convert your 'Post It' process map into a printable hard copy using a free online website. This is great for using at future meeting or sharing with others for discussion

Free online website - http://www.draw.io/

What does your System look like?

Start of process → ? ? ? ? → End of process

hǽlò

The bigger picture

How do your System link together?

Start of Process

End of Process

Patient

GP's

Hospitals

Pharmacy

Community

?

?

?