



**CASE STUDY**

Department of Health,  
Informatics Policy and Planning

**› BUILDING NHS CAPABILITY  
IN PORTFOLIO, PROGRAMME  
AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT  
WITH PRINCE2 P3M3**



# 1. INTRODUCTION

As the largest publicly funded health service in the world, the National Health Service (NHS) provides for the healthcare needs of everyone in the UK, free at the point of delivery. In England it caters for a population of 56 million, employs more than 1.3 million workers and deals with a million patients every 36 hours.

NHS organizations are going through a period of change and reform, facing the challenging task of delivering transformation while protecting quality, the effective use of resources and continuing productivity. The NHS needed a framework to manage and control the delivery of change across portfolio, programme and project management, with the aim of building its capabilities to manage the implementation of transformation objectives both effectively and efficiently.

PRINCE2 P3M3<sup>®</sup> Maturity Model is designed to explore process and capability maturity in organizations as a basis for improvement. It recognizes the value of corporate portfolio management, and includes guidance from PeopleCert publications such as Managing Successful Programmes (MSP<sup>®</sup>), to offer a thorough assessment of portfolio, programme and project management (P3M).

## 2. THE AIM

Research has shown that high-performing project organizations tend to have a systematic and consistently applied approach to projects. By assessing their portfolio, programme and project management maturity against the five maturity levels of PRINCE2 P3M3 (see 4.1), organizations can understand how well their programme and project management processes are embedded into their corporate approach. This, in turn, provides an indication of their future performance.

The NHS elected to evaluate the PRINCE2 P3M3 as a potential way forward: to measure its current levels of organizational ability, establish where improvement was needed and track the journey to achieving a higher level of ability.

A pilot study of PRINCE2 P3M3 was set up across three NHS organizations that were facing change with different and significant challenges. The overall aim was to gain a deeper understanding of how the PRINCE2 P3M3 maturity model could support portfolio, programme and project management improvement within healthcare organizations.

The initiative would assess how PRINCE2 P3M3 could:

- › Provide a baseline of the organization's current project management capability from which to measure improvement
- › Identify the organization's strengths and weaknesses across existing skill sets
- › Help to prioritize project management improvement initiatives
- › Support the goal of project management maturity improvement.

The following three organizations were chosen for the pilot:

- › **East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)** which had recently established a Programme Management Office (PMO) and was keen to assess its project management maturity to set a baseline for the measurement of further improvements.
- › **Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS)** which was investing in organizational development to support its transition through to being authorized as a foundation trust. YAS looked to PRINCE2 P3M3 for an independent assessment of the project management maturity level of its approach, and to highlight those areas where investment and performance improvement could give the most value. This helped set a benchmark from which YAS could establish the maturity level it aspired to reach, providing a gap analysis between current and target levels and the project management skills required to deliver projects to the desired standard.
- › **Sheffield Teaching Hospitals (STH)** which wanted to understand more about its current project management capability, in order to prioritize investment in specific areas of development and improvement.

## 3. THE APPROACH

The PRINCE2 P3M3 assessment was carried out using a moderated self-assessment approach with three key steps:

1. An initial assessment was carried out by each organization's project staff using the online self-assessment questionnaire.
2. A workshop was held at all three organizations for staff to discuss the individual assessments and to derive the organization's overall maturity level. These workshops were facilitated by members of the P3M development team in the Department of Health Informatics Directorate (DHID). The facilitators' independence enabled the workshop discussions and analysis to be moderated effectively.
3. Focus groups were held to look at each organization's reflections and the lessons learned from the pilot, in order to draw out the applicability of PRINCE2 P3M3 as a tool that could contribute to NHS service improvement.

Throughout the sessions, project professionals from all the organizations worked with PRINCE2 P3M3 to assess current performance against the perspectives and attributes within the model.

## 4. CHALLENGES

- › For YAS, not all projects were controlled through the programme and project management team, so there was a need to bring other project managers on board.
- › Setting appropriate target levels of maturity to aspire to (see 4.1), having established the levels of maturity for current project and programme management operations.
- › Achieving buy-in from the organization as a whole for the various elements and governance for delivering projects to the P3M3 guidance.

### 4.1 THE FIVE MATURITY LEVELS OF P3M3

#### **Level 1 – Awareness process**

The organization can recognize projects but has little structured approach for dealing with them.

#### **Level 2 – Repeatable process**

Some areas are beginning to use standard processes, but there is no consistency across the organization.

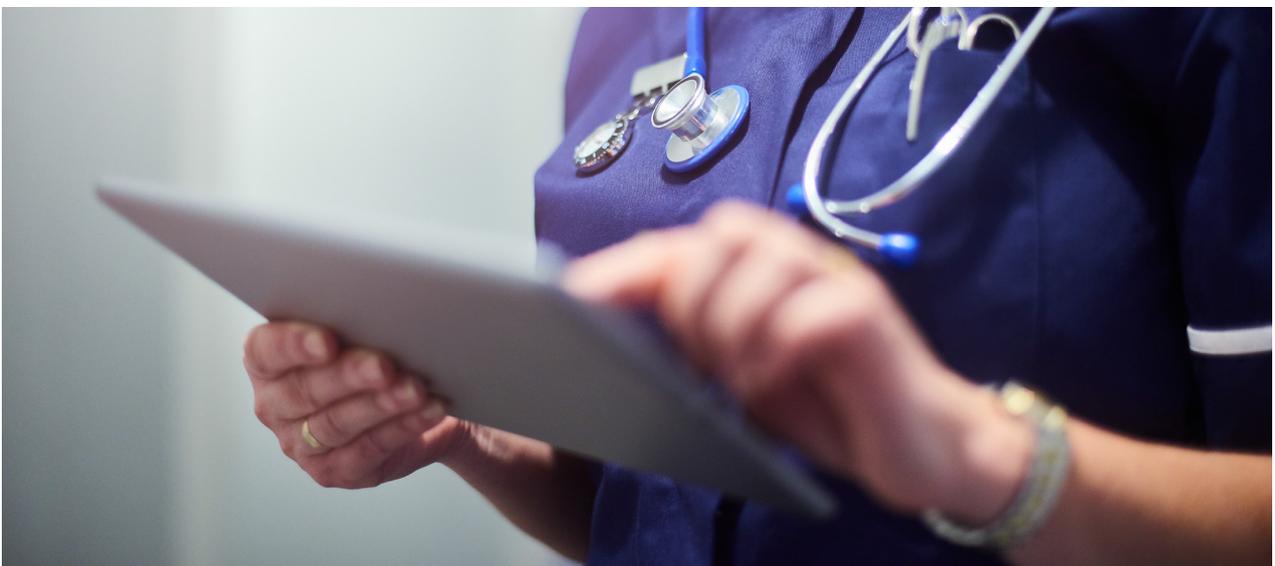
#### **Level 3 – Defined process**

A consistent set of standards is used, with clear process ownership.

#### **Level 4 – Managed process**

Process efficiency is monitored and measured with active interventions for improvement.

**Level 5 – Optimized process** Quantitatively managed processes are optimized according to changing business needs and external factors.



# 5. SUCCESSES

## 5.1 EAST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE

At EMAS, the PRINCE2 P3M3 initiative provided an objective and independent assessment that the trust could use to understand where it currently stood in terms of delivering transformational change programmes using project and programme management as strategic skills. The outputs from the workshops and focus groups were repositioned as core processes within the trust and presented to the EMAS Transformation Board who agreed an action plan that resulted from the pilot. It made five recommendations:

- › Embed a standardized project management process throughout the organization. EMAS's current processes had been based on visits to other trusts to understand best practice, and that was mixed with internal processes based on elements of PRINCE2®.
- › Use a standardized set of documents.
- › Put in place a continuing professional development programme for regular training events on project management.
- › Integrate training (which should be primarily face-to-face and based on an individual's level of project management experience) with PRINCE2 training.
- › Improve the integration of project management within the wider business planning cycle. In addition, a PRINCE2 P3M3 reassessment was scheduled to measure progress and provide feedback into further development plans.

## 5.2 YORKSHIRE AMBULANCE SERVICE

The PRINCE2 P3M3 assessment provided the YAS project management team with an authoritative and impartial assessment that could be used for discussions with executive management on the actions, commitment and resources that would be needed to achieve the target project delivery level. YAS is using the findings to transform practices which will help the foundation trust achieve its four strategic aims:

- › **Continuously improving patient care** By improving its delivery of projects, YAS can improve levels of patient care and experience.
- › **High performing** Improved project management maturity will help YAS to raise performance levels.
- › **Always learning** The detailed analysis of all constituent elements of the maturity assessment identified the gaps between current performance and targets. It also helped the foundation trust to gain an understanding of all the requirements for the effective delivery of project management. This could then be fed into professional development plans for individual project managers.
- › **Delivering value for money** Applying PRINCE2 P3M3 consistently will provide efficiencies across all delivery processes.

## 5.3 SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS

For Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, the PRINCE2 P3M3 assessment provided a thorough audit of the component processes within portfolio, programme and project management. STH also found that this process was useful in helping it focus on specific areas; in particular, enhancing risk management. As a result the organization has:

- › Assessed how well it performed within each process perspective and has taken steps to embed the processes as part of the development plan
- › Identified those areas where investment in improvement will offer the most benefit
- › Prioritized investment, focusing on areas where new or enhanced skills development is most needed and will prove most effective
- › Introduced an organization-wide professional development programme that is linked to the annual appraisal process

## 6. CONCLUSION

“These three organizations had a good level of project management maturity and were advanced in the sense that they wanted to make further improvements to their organizational project management capability. The PRINCE2 P3M3 model and process were really useful to help them identify where improvements could be made.”

**Sarah Briggs**, Department of Health, Informatics and Policy and Planning Directorate

Briggs is confident that PRINCE2 P3M3 has a lot to offer NHS organizations:

“It encourages a really systematic approach, which helps to select, prioritize and manage the total workload involved in delivering transformational change.”

**Sarah Briggs**, Department of Health, Informatics and Policy and Planning Directorate

The pilot study across these three very different organizations demonstrated how the PRINCE2 P3M3 assessment could provide an objective evaluation of a health organization’s project management maturity and so feed information into the development of an improvement action plan. With the PRINCE2 P3M3 maturity model these organizations achieved a comprehensive assessment of their existing capabilities and organizational processes. Using this as baseline for improvement, they have been able to prioritize according to the impact of development in any given area. For an industry facing significant transformational change, this provides the critical information needed to implement and sustain effective improvements.

By using a maturity assessment model, the NHS can be confident that every aspect of current best practice has been incorporated. PRINCE2 P3M3 includes expert guidance from the official Best Management Practice publications from the Cabinet Office, covering all aspects of portfolio, programme and project management.



## 7. THE FUTURE

The Department of Health continues to implement project and programme management standards to support the successful delivery of large-scale change in the NHS. P3M capability is being developed throughout the NHS to ensure consistency and visibility across financial and quality goals. The P3M programme is designed to build capability for the delivery of successful programmes and projects through a collaborative community that shares best practices.

An NHS P3M Resource Centre has been developed to provide information on PRINCE2 P3M3, together with other materials, tools and guidance that are essential to the successful delivery of transformational change.

“PRINCE2 P3M3 has provided the baseline from which we can develop and consistently strengthen our capability across all areas of portfolio, programme and project management.”

**Sarah Briggs**, Department of Health, Informatics and Policy and Planning Directorate

Steps are being taken to use PRINCE2 P3M3 more widely across the NHS for current, merging and emerging organizations.

A national study is currently being undertaken, using elements of PRINCE2 P3M3 to provide an indicative assessment of project management maturity in the NHS. Work is also being undertaken to support the accessibility of PRINCE2 P3M3 to the NHS, through the development of simple and more detailed self-assessment spreadsheets.

There is a large amount of change activity currently taking place and organizations are gearing up to deliver this change. Many NHS organizations are looking to the P3M programme for practices and structures to assist with the delivery of their change agenda. P3M is being used to help organizations to baseline their current practices and put in place improvement plans to create the right environment to deliver change.

### FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PRINCE2 P3M3

PRINCE2 P3M3 helps organizations address fundamental aspects of managing portfolios, programmes and projects. It improves the likelihood of quality results and successful outcomes and reduces the likelihood of adverse impacts from risks.

PRINCE2 P3M3 can be used in several ways:

- › To understand the key practices that are part of effective portfolio, programme and project management processes
- › Within portfolios, programmes and projects PRINCE2 P3M3 creates the opportunity to assess seven essential components, known as process perspectives:
  - *Management control*
  - *Benefits management*
  - *Financial management*
  - *Stakeholder engagement*
  - *Risk management*
  - *Organizational governance*
  - *Resource management*
- › To identify the key practices that must be embedded within the organization to achieve the next maturity level
- › To understand and improve their capability to manage programmes and projects more effectively in the future.

The PRINCE2 P3M3 model contains three models that enable independent assessment. There are no interdependencies between the models, so an organization may be better at programme management than it is at project management, for example. The models are:

- › Portfolio Management (PfM3)
- › Programme Management (PgM3)
- › Project Management (PjM3).

The levels described within the PRINCE2 P3M3 model indicate how key process areas can be structured hierarchically to provide transition states for an organization wishing to set realistic and sensible goals for improvement. The levels facilitate organizational transitions from an immature state to becoming a mature and capable organization able to handle initiatives based on a standardized, defined process – in line with specific business need.

The five structured levels for maturity are:

- › **Level 1:** awareness of process
- › **Level 2:** repeatable process
- › **Level 3:** defined process
- › **Level 4:** managed process
- › **Level 5:** optimized process.

For more information, see <https://www.peoplecert.org/Organisations/Services/Drive-Organisational-Growth-P3M3>

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