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Five ways we can help

An introduction to the Health Foundation for those embarking on large-scale health care change

April 2015

About us

The Health Foundation is an independent charity working to improve the quality of health care in the UK. We are here to support people working in health care practice and policy to make lasting improvements to health services.

We carry out research and in-depth policy analysis, fund improvement programmes in the NHS, support and develop leaders and share evidence to encourage wider change.

Over the next three years we will be focusing on improving:

- service delivery
- public policy
- population health.

Within each area we will work with those in health policy and practice to:

- develop the evidence base
- test innovations and spread improvement
- build skills.

We share what we learn to help shape health care policy and practice across the UK.

About this guide

This short guide provides an introduction to the past, present and future work of the Health Foundation. It is specifically designed to highlight resources useful to those embarking on large-scale health care change.

The guide contains five relevant examples of our work in each of the following areas:

Practical resources

Research reports

Improvement programmes

Useful figures and diagrams

Future opportunities

The Health Foundation is here to work with people across the UK to improve the quality of health and health care.

If you would like further information about anything in the guide, or if you have ideas about how we could work with you, please email info@health.org.uk or visit our website at www.health.org.uk

1 Quick guides

Quick guides provide short, accessible introductions to key areas of health care improvement.

- **Quality improvement made simple:** common approaches to quality improvement, where they have come from and their underlying principles.
- **Evaluation: what to consider:** methodological and practical considerations for those new to health care evaluation.
- **Person-centred care made simple:** the principles of person-centred care, why it is important, how it has developed and examples of putting it into practice.

www.health.org.uk/quickguides

2 Practical guides

Practical guides aim to help those working in health care make constructive changes.

- **A framework for measuring and monitoring safety:** introduces the framework (see page 10 of this guide) and explains how it can help those working in the NHS answer the question 'How safe is our care?'
- **Using communication approaches to spread improvement:** introduces key concepts about spreading ideas and the role communications approaches can play in effectively spreading improvement work.

www.health.org.uk/quickguides

We produce a range of practical tools, guides and resources to help those involved in quality improvement.

www.health.org.uk/learning

3 Research scan

The Research Scan is a free service offered by the Health Foundation. Every month we scan thousands of journals then select and summarise the best health care improvement articles. The scan then provides a monthly email summary of the top 60 most recent articles about improving quality in health care.

www.health.org.uk/researchscan

4 Resource centres

Our resource centres are here to help people working in health care improve patient safety and deliver person-centred care. They contain practical tools, best practice strategies, personal accounts and research evidence in the following two areas:

- patient safety: patientsafety.health.org.uk
- person-centred care: personcentredcare.health.org.uk

5 Webinars, videos and presentations

Our webinars cover the Health Foundation's latest research and analysis as well as findings from our improvement programmes. Previous webinars include practical steps for boards to measure and monitor safety in their organisation, and improving the quality of care for older people. You can also view presentations including on hospital finances and productivity, and improving safety in clinical systems.

www.health.org.uk/multimedia

Practical resources

1 Building the foundations for improvement

This report looks at how five UK trusts built quality improvement capability at scale in their organisations.

The report provides an insight into how and why the trusts embarked on their improvement journeys, the impact they achieved and the challenges they encountered.

It also provides a useful checklist of points for organisations to consider before planning, designing and delivering an improvement capability building programme.

www.health.org.uk/buildingfoundations

We commission and publish a range of world-leading research into the art and science of health care quality improvement.

www.health.org.uk/publications

2 Effective networks for improvement

This report draws on a literature review and empirical evidence about effective networks to describe the component parts of a successful improvement network.

While the authors found no 'one size fits all' formula for successful network design, they did identify five core features of effective networks: common purpose; cooperative structure; critical mass; collective intelligence; community building. See page 12 of this guide for a diagram showing how these factors fit together.

www.health.org.uk/effectivenetworks

Research reports

3 Skilled for improvement?

This report provides a detailed exploration of four improvement projects and draws out lessons from them. It describes the difficulties and barriers that arise in improvement work and identifies three sets of skills – 'technical', 'soft' and 'learning' skills – that were found to be essential for successful implementation of improvement.

www.health.org.uk/skilled4improvement

4 Overcoming challenges to improving quality

This report provides a synthesis of learning from 14 of the Health Foundation's improvement programme evaluations and sets this learning in its wider context. The report identifies ten challenges to improvement that consistently emerged, and ways to overcome them (see page 11 of this guide).

www.health.org.uk/overcoming-challenges

5 Perspectives on context

In this collection of essays, leading academics in the field discuss defining and framing context, the key conceptual and empirical literature in the field and the main unanswered questions about context and improvement. The essays provide a fascinating range of insights into the importance – and challenges – of context.

www.health.org.uk/perspectivesoncontext

Improvement programmes

1 Flow Cost Quality

Flow Cost Quality ran from 2010–2012, focusing on the relationship between patient flow, costs and outcomes in two trusts. Teams from multiple specialities and departments across each trust examined patient flow through their emergency care pathway and looked at ways in which capacity could be better matched with demand, to prevent queues and poor outcomes for patients.

www.health.org.uk/flowcostquality

2 Closing the Gap through Clinical Communities

This programme ran from 2009–2012 and set out to close the gap between regular care and best practice. Led by clinicians with a track record as influential leaders within their clinical networks, each of the 11 projects aimed to improve the quality and safety of care in a different clinical area, from improving care for newborn babies with brain injuries to reducing the rate of blood-borne viruses among people with substance misuse problems.

www.health.org.uk/ctgclincomm

3 Safer Clinical Systems

The Safer Clinical Systems approach aims to improve patient safety not by imposing pre-defined solutions on organisations, but by developing their own capacity to detect and assess system-level weaknesses and introduce interventions to address them. It is based on principles adapted from high-reliability organisations, established risk management techniques from hazardous industries, and quality improvement methods.

The approach was tested and developed over two phases of the Safer Clinical Systems programme between 2008 and 2014.

www.health.org.uk/scs

4 Shine 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014

Our Shine improvement programme ran from 2010–2014 and has supported over 80 projects to test small-scale innovations to improve quality in health care. Types of intervention typically involved: using information technology to improve services; changing the way services are organised; improving access to information for patients and clinicians; supporting and training staff; and working collaboratively with patients to improve the way their care is delivered.

Shine has now been replaced by Innovating for Improvement (see page 16).

www.health.org.uk/shine

5 Co-creating Health and Spreading self-management support

These programmes explored how to embed self-management support within mainstream health services across the UK. They aimed to equip individuals and clinicians to work in partnership to achieve better outcomes, testing and demonstrating the training, tools and system enablers that determine the extent to which individuals are able to play an active role in managing their own health.

www.health.org.uk/cch; www.health.org.uk/spreadingsms

We fund a wide range of health care improvement programmes across the UK.

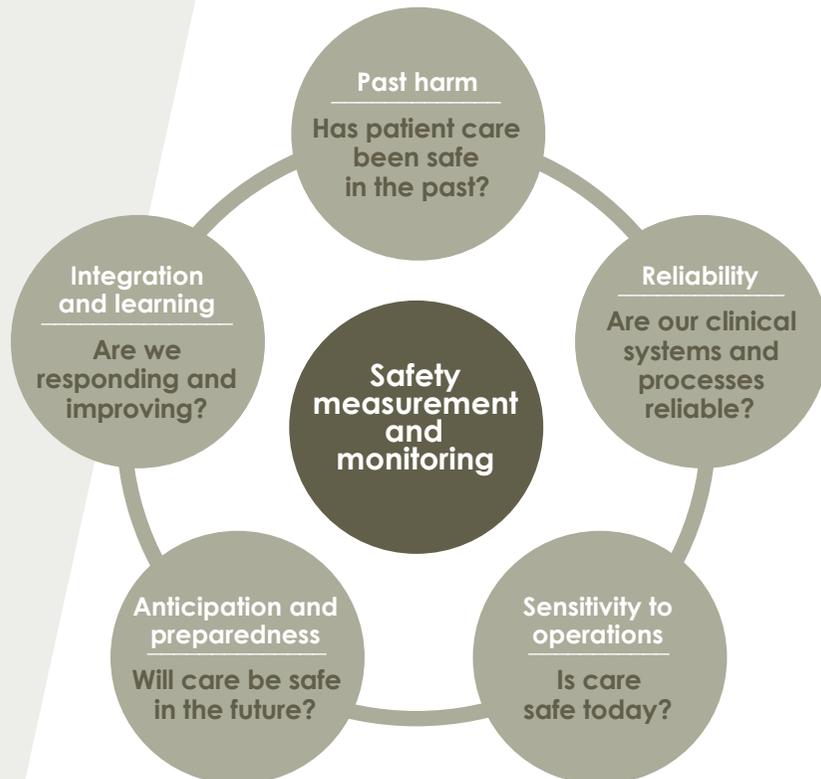
www.health.org.uk/programmes

Useful figures and diagrams

1 A framework for measuring and monitoring safety

This diagram sets out the five dimensions of safety measurement and monitoring. This framework encompasses the principal facets of safety but also provides a simplicity and clarity with which to guide and inform safety measurement and monitoring.

From: *The measurement and monitoring of safety.*
www.health.org.uk/safety-measurement



2 Ten challenges to quality improvement

The table below shows ten challenges to quality improvement, within three themes, that consistently emerged in evaluations of Health Foundation's improvement programmes.

From: *Overcoming challenges to improving quality.*
www.health.org.uk/overcoming-challenges

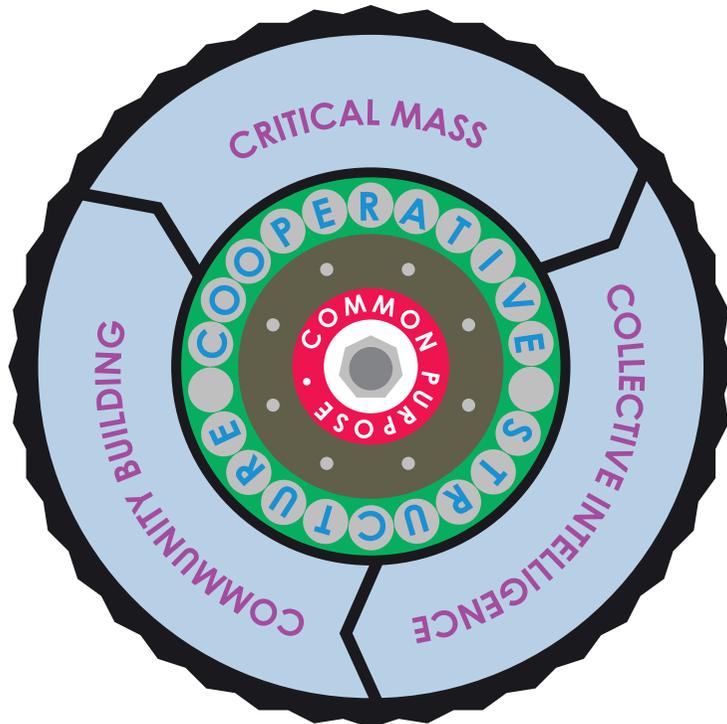
Design and planning	Contexts, professions and leadership	Sustainability, spread and unintended consequences
1. Convincing people that there is a problem	4. Excess ambitions and 'projectness'	9. Securing sustainability
2. Convincing people that the solution chosen is the right one	5. The organisational context, culture and capacities	10. Considering the side effects of change
3. Getting data collection and monitoring systems right	6. Tribalism and lack of staff engagement	
	7. Leadership	
	8. Balancing carrots and sticks	

Useful figures and diagrams

3 Core features of an effective network

Research identified five core features of effective networks that support quality improvement in health care. Known as the '5C wheel', all features within the framework are interdependent and interact with each other, collectively enabling a network to support service delivery while encouraging learning and change.

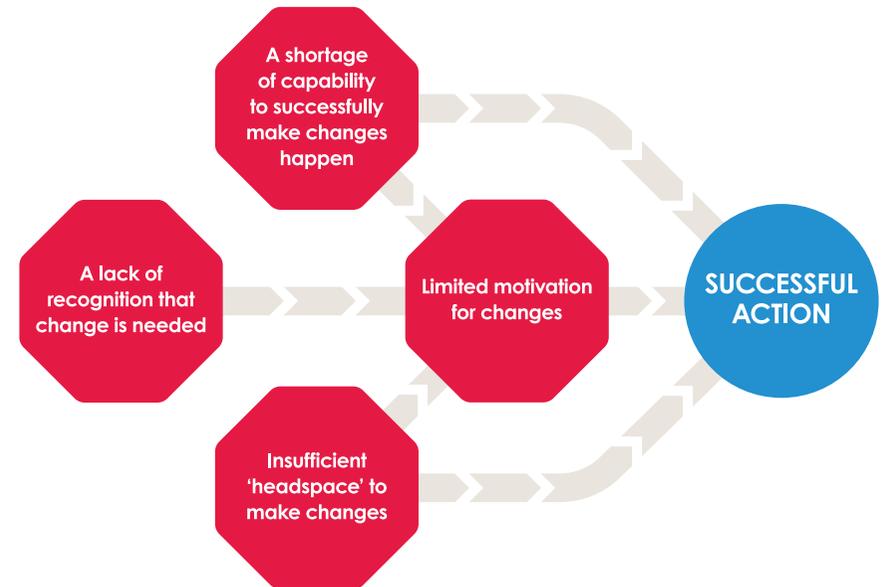
From: *Effective networks for improvement*
www.health.org.uk/effectivenetworks



4 Four barriers to change in the NHS

Our recent report, *Constructive comfort: accelerating change in the NHS*, identified four key barriers to change, based on a series of interviews with clinicians, academics, improvement leaders, commissioners, managers and leaders in national bodies. Interviewees were asked about how change happens and what could be done differently.

From: *Constructive comfort: accelerating change in the NHS*
www.health.org.uk/acceleratingchange



Useful figures and diagrams

5 Seven success factors for effective change

Constructive comfort: accelerating change in the NHS identifies seven success factors for change relevant to the NHS. These success factors are not new, but summarise what is recognised as important in delivering successful change in the NHS.

From: *Constructive comfort: accelerating change in the NHS*
www.health.org.uk/acceleratingchange



Future opportunities

We have a number of ongoing opportunities that we encourage areas to consider getting involved in.

1 Funding to unlock improvement ideas

Scaling Up Improvement

Our Scaling Up Improvement programme supports organisations to take improvement interventions and approaches that have been successfully tested at a small scale and demonstrate their effectiveness at a larger scale.

Participating organisations receive up to £500,000 to design, deliver and evaluate the impact of their projects.

Next steps: Applications open on 28 April 2015.

www.health.org.uk/scalingup

Innovating for Improvement

Our Innovating for Improvement programme offers funding to health care teams to test and develop their innovative approaches and ideas to improve health care delivery in the UK.

Teams with great ideas and the relevant skills to implement and evaluate their project can apply for funding of up to £75,000.

Next steps: Applications open in summer 2015.

www.health.org.uk/innovatingimprovement

2 Data analytics

The Health Foundation has recently established a data analytics team to demonstrate how routine data sets can be used to improve health care. The team would be happy to speak with those embarking on large-scale change about how analytical methods could be applied locally.

Routine data sets are updated on a regular basis, meaning that information can be produced in close to real-time about the effectiveness of new interventions. However, a control group is needed to provide information about what patients might have experienced in the absence of the new intervention.

Recently, approaches have been developed to retrospectively select controls from large routine data sets. These involve characterising the patients receiving the new intervention as closely as possible – for example, describing their age, gender, diagnoses of health conditions, and prior rates of health and social care service use.

Control patients are then selected to have similar characteristics to the intervention patients, using statistical methods such as propensity score matching or genetic matching. When analysing metrics such as hospital admissions, these methods provide a more credible evidence base for improvement than before-and-after designs.

Valuable information can be obtained from routine, person-level data sets, including the Hospital Episode Statistics, GP data and social care data. By linking these data sets together, it is possible to track the service utilisation of cohorts of people receiving new interventions over time. Some of the metrics available from these data include rates of emergency hospital admission, length of hospital stay, numbers of care home admissions and cost.

Next steps: Please email info@health.org.uk to discuss data analytics and what our team can offer.

Future opportunities

3 Q initiative

Q is a new initiative, led by the Health Foundation and supported by NHS England, connecting people skilled in improvement across the UK.

Q will make it easier for people from all parts of the health system with expertise in improvement to share ideas, enhance their skills and make changes that benefit patients.

Working with partners in the health service, we are currently recruiting an initial cohort of 150 to 250 participants – the founding cohort – who will collaboratively contribute to the long term design and structure of Q. The aim is to connect a critical mass of 5,000 participants by 2020.

In addition to the focus on helping to design, refine and test components of Q, the founding cohort participants will have opportunities to attend networking events and development activities.

Q is also supporting regional improvement organisations to map expertise and people undertaking improvement work more widely in order to understand local needs and to support these people and their work.

Next steps: For further information, including details on the selection criteria and nominating organisations, please email q@health.org.uk or visit www.health.org.uk/q-initiative

4 GenerationQ

GenerationQ is a pioneering leadership programme, designed to develop a new generation of skilled and effective leaders of quality improvement in health care. It is aimed at senior leaders from health care policy and practice, and the charity sector.

GenerationQ Fellows benefit from the opportunity to:

- work with people from different organisations and sectors
- learn about theories of leadership for quality improvement, and how to apply them
- be supported in delivering a significant improvement project in the workplace.

By supporting a Fellow, organisations benefit from an improvement project addressing real-time quality challenges, as well as increased awareness and interest in improving quality as Fellows share their learning and engage with others.

Next steps: Applications open in autumn 2015.

www.health.org.uk/generationQ

5 Realising the Value

The Health Foundation is working in partnership with Nesta to lead the Realising the Value programme on behalf of NHS England.

Realising the Value aims to demonstrate the value of individuals and communities playing a key role in health, modelling the impact of evidence-based approaches and developing tools to support implementation and culture change, investigating system enablers and testing models to affect change. The work will bring together and consolidate best practice and learning from across the system (including the voluntary and community sector) and consider how key approaches can be scaled at national and local level.

Next steps: Please email info@health.org.uk for further information.