
What is Q?

March 2016

Q

A connected community
working together to improve
health and care across the UK



What is Q?

Q is a diverse and growing community of people with experience and understanding of improvement, committed to working collaboratively to improve the quality of health and care across the UK.

Over time Q will grow to be a community of thousands including people at the frontline of care, patient leaders, managers, researchers, policy makers and more.

Q makes it easier for people to share ideas, enhance their skills and make changes that improve health and care.

To ensure Q meets the needs of those doing improvement work, we recruited a founding cohort of 231 members to help design and test Q in 2015. We will begin to further grow the community with our next phase of recruitment from summer 2016.

Q stands for Quality as defined by the Institute of Medicine:¹ safety, effectiveness, person centredness, timeliness, efficiency and equity.

Improvement in the context of Q means any structured approach to making things better. This includes, but is broader than 'Quality Improvement' methodologies.

¹ Institute of Medicine (IOM). *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001.

How can Q help address challenges facing improvement?

The UK health and care systems are facing major challenges, with requirements to improve health and care on many different fronts at significant scale and pace, and in the face of considerable financial challenges.

Enhancing the ability of systems to identify and respond to innovative ideas is critical to enable the bold changes that health and care so urgently needs.

In recent decades, thousands of people in health and care have been trained in structured approaches to improvement. There are also many people without formal training who are leading change and improvement.

Creating ways to surface, support, develop, connect and mobilise people will help to maximise their impact and accelerate improvement.

As the four nations of the UK continue to promote increased integration of health and care and the importance of prevention, Q will provide a long-term platform for cross-boundary learning and change.

If we have... people who understand and can help across networks and across regions, then that will be very powerful.

Q member

How will Q complement other work?

Q aims to complement other local, regional and national improvement activities and networks – providing long-term connections with people across all four nations and, in time, links beyond health and care and the UK. These connections will enable members to bolster their work and impact.

Members of Q will likely already belong to other existing networks and initiatives they value deeply. While some of these tend to be focused on a particular profession, geography, subject area or time-limited project, Q will be unique for the breadth and diversity of its membership.

Q will strengthen and complement other initiatives and networks by:

- + making it easy to find out who is skilled in improvement in a particular area
- + contributing to building the capability of people leading improvement by signposting and providing useful resources and infrastructure
- + making it easier to find and work with others on shared challenges
- + seeking to build a more supportive environment for improvement.

What are the benefits of Q?

Benefits for patients and the UK population

- + Through Q, people who understand how to make services better are pooling their knowledge and energy, with a focus on achieving practical and measureable improvements in health and care.
- + Q will give those who bring the patient and public perspective greater voice and recognition as equally valued contributors to quality improvement.
- + Q aims to foster improvement in every part of the health and care systems. The ambition is for people who use services to be more confident that the way they are designed and run is informed by leading practice from across the UK.

Benefits for members

- + Members will join a community of diverse individuals, enabling connections that expand and enrich their existing networks. Q provides a 'home' to turn to for inspiration and support.
- + Q helps identify and recognise people leading improvement work – increasing their profile locally, regionally and nationally.
- + Q provides opportunities for personal and professional growth, including being able to participate in activities and opportunities to learn, share and get advice from a wider network of peers in a way that taught courses are not easily able to provide. There are no membership fees to join Q.
- + Q makes it easier to learn from others' ideas, successes and mistakes, to accelerate progress on members' own improvement objectives.

Benefits for employers

- + Q will create time-efficient ways for members to draw on the expertise of others to accelerate work on local improvement priorities, ensuring that their organisation is tapping into the best ideas from across the UK and beyond.
- + Q will equip members with skills and resources to enhance their ability to act as leaders, role models and mentors for those they work with to drive improvement.
- + The online Q directory helps employers identify who has skills and a passion for improvement.

Benefits for the health and care systems

- + Q will help promote improvement within the health and care systems, encouraging and supporting a wide range of people to effectively lead improvement.
- + Providing a clear picture of who is currently skilled in improvement will make it easier to target improvement capability building activity.
- + Over time, a platform will be established for people to collaborate across the UK on improvement challenges, making it easier to pool knowledge and energy to enable faster and more sustainable progress on cross-system issues.

We embrace the value of innovation in our organisation and hope that being active participants will help drive this.

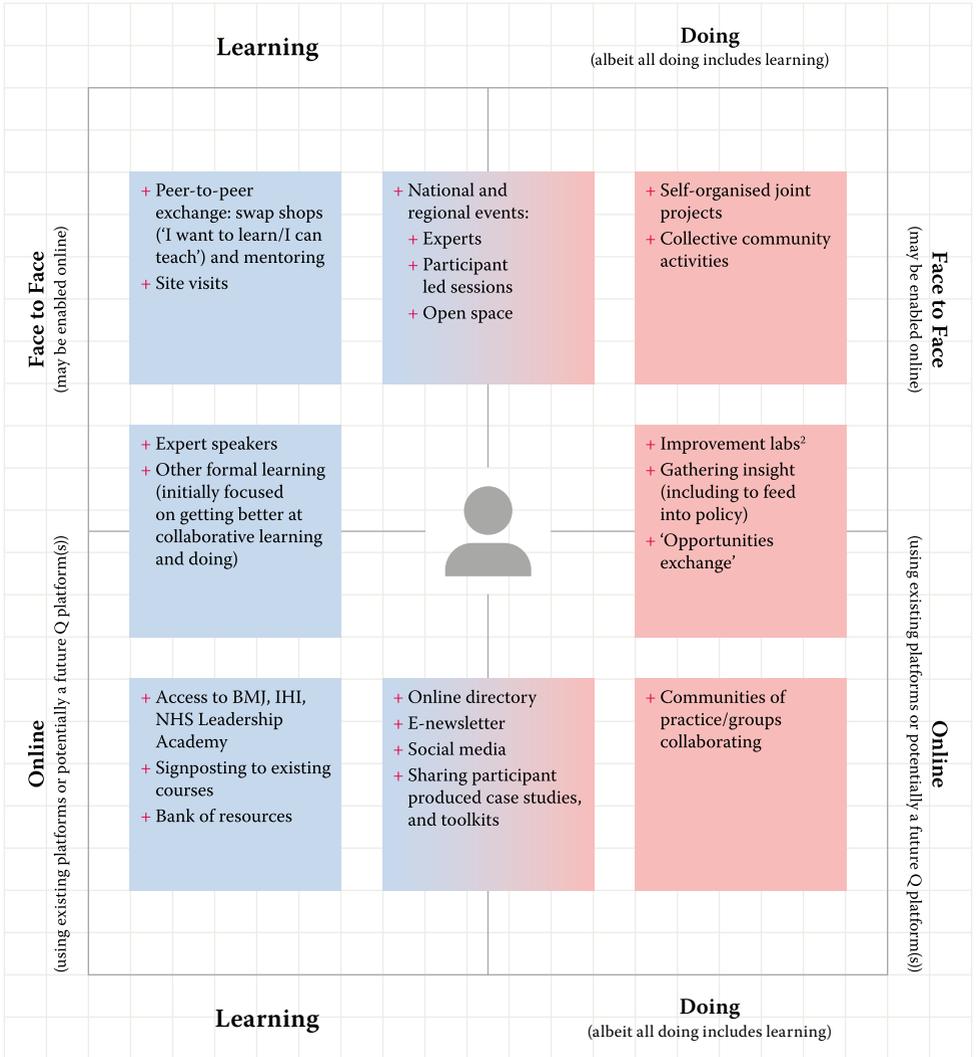
Employer of a Q member

What will the members of the community will be doing?

Q is first and foremost about helping people to enhance their existing work in improvement.

As part of the design work with the founding cohort, we focused on understanding what infrastructure, resources, opportunities and activities would be most helpful to members. What Q offers needs to be suitable for a diverse range of experiences and interests and complement existing opportunities and activities.

Q aims to catalyse the ideas and activities of its members. While some of the infrastructure and activities will be managed centrally, in many instances Q is creating spaces for members to self-organise. The diagram on page 9 highlights some of the ideas, which the founding cohort identified as being of most importance in supporting the community and their improvement work. The following online and offline activities and resources will be piloted during 2016/17.



2 We are developing a small number of improvement labs. Labs will focus on complex problems where there is benefit in rapidly pooling expertise beyond what individual organisations or existing initiatives are already doing. This is being further developed and prototyped during 2016.

How can people join Q?

Many people are involved in improvement in different ways in the UK. Q is intended to attract people who combine a considered and lived commitment to collaborative improvement with practical understanding and experience of improvement work.

Q aims to attract those with skills and time to act as curators and sharers of knowledge and ideas across boundaries, greater than their immediate teams. Q should support and attract those with the passion and outlook to be leaders of collaborative work.

Over the past six months we have been working with the founding cohort to develop selection criteria to join Q. While the community will be highly diverse, setting criteria is intended to ensure that those who join the community have reflected on what joining Q means, and have sufficient shared understanding and experience of what it takes to make things better in the health and care system.

Selection criteria

+ Considered and lived commitment to collaborative improvement. This includes commitment to the ambitions, ways of working and specific requirements of the Q community.

+ Experience of playing an influential, leading role in efforts to improve quality across boundaries.

+ Ability to articulate and reflect deeply on the approaches used personally and by others involved in improving quality.

Joining the community will involve a one-stage application process, using an online system. The opportunity to apply will be phased to ensure we can give proper attention to the large number of applications expected.

Phased recruitment

Summer 2016

Applications will open for:

- + those with improvement expertise and experience who bring a patient's or carer's perspective and are working predominantly at a national level and
- + the alumni of a number of identified improvement courses.

Autumn 2016

Applications will be open to everyone who meets the criteria within a particular region.³ We will be rotating the opportunity to apply through the regions, commencing an initial pilot with two regions and then rolling out through the other regions in 2017. There will not be a cap on numbers. Everyone who is considered to meet the criteria will be welcomed into Q.

Next steps

For more information, please visit the Health Foundation website via www.health.org.uk/q or contact us via q@health.org.uk

If Q is something you are interested in joining, please register for updates via the website.

³ For the purpose of Q, we are referring to 18 'regions': comprising Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and the 15 areas covered by England's Academic Health Science Networks.

Q is led by the Health Foundation and supported and co-funded by NHS England

About the Health Foundation

The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK.

Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality health care that can be equitably accessed. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen. We use what we know works on the ground to inform effective policymaking and vice versa.

We believe good health and health care are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people's skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population.

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Registered company number: 1714937

About NHS England

NHS England is the national commissioning body for the NHS in England. It exists to create the culture and conditions for high quality health and care services, including safe health care, for all, now and for future generations and ensure that valuable public resources are used effectively to get the best outcomes for individuals, communities and society.

NHS England works as direct commissioners of some types of health care (including primary care and specialised commissioning), assurers of Clinical Commissioning Groups commissioning of other services (including secondary care) and as a key player within the wider health and social care system.

NHS England also works to develop and deliver the future shape of the English health care system in collaboration with its partners.

For more information, visit:

www.health.org.uk/Q

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