



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

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

May 2016

About Q

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 front line of care, managers, researchers, patient leaders and policymakers. Our aim is to connect a critical mass of people in order to radically expand and accelerate improvement in the quality of care.

Q will make it easier for people with expertise in improvement to share ideas, enhance their skills and make changes that bring tangible improvements in health and care.

Q is also an infrastructure that supports individuals with their improvement work and makes it possible for the community to come together.

What is the difference between Q and other initiatives, networks or programmes?

Q is intended to complement and underpin other initiatives, networks and programmes, not compete with them.

Q is aimed at individuals and will provide a long-term infrastructure to support them throughout their improvement career.

Q will support other initiatives and programmes by:

- a) making it easier to understand what improvement work is being done, by whom, and where UK-wide!
- b) providing resources and platforms to connect and support across existing networks
- c) making it easier to collaborate on areas of shared interest
- d) Influencing the context of improvement.



Where did Q come from? Is patient safety part of Q?

Q began as an initiative to recruit '5,000 Safety Fellows' following a recommendation of the widely respected [2013 Berwick report *A promise to learn, a commitment to act.*](#)

Recognising those with improvement expertise was part of the report's recommendations about how best to improve safety in the wake of failings of care at Mid Staffordshire Hospitals NHS Trust. The report made the case for a system devoted to continual learning and improvement.

In 2014 NHS England approached the Health Foundation to lead the design and delivery of the initiative.

The Health Foundation's UK-wide remit and funding means the initiative will bring together those committed to health and care quality across all four countries in the UK.

The decision was also made to expand beyond patient safety to cover all domains of quality in line with the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) definition; safe, effective, patient-centred, timely, efficient and equitable.

Who funds Q?

Q is co-funded by the Health Foundation and NHS Improvement. Previously Q was co-funded by NHS England. On 1 April 2016, the Patient Safety team transferred to NHS Improvement, along with co-funding commitments to Q.

Who designed Q?

To ensure the design of Q meets the needs of those who will be part of the community, we collaboratively designed the initiative together with 231 founding cohort members during 2015.

In addition, throughout the design process, we have involved eminent leaders of improvement and wider stakeholders.. To date, we have engaged more than 500 people in the design of Q.



Who benefits from Q?

Benefits for members

Q will help identify and recognise people leading quality improvement work – increasing their profile locally and nationally. People will join a community of diverse individuals, enabling connections that expand and enrich participants' existing professional networks. Q will provide a 'home' to turn to for inspiration and support.

Q will provide opportunities for personal and professional growth including being able to learn, share and get advice from a wider network of peers in a way that structured courses are not easily able to provide.

Q will make it easier to learn from others' ideas, successes and mistakes to accelerate progress on participants' own improvement objectives.

Benefits for employers

The Q directory will help employers know who within their organisation has outward-facing skills and passion for improvement.

Q will create time-efficient ways for participants to draw on the expertise of others to accelerate work on local priorities, ensuring their organisation is tapping into the best ideas from across the UK and beyond.

Q will equip participants with skills and resources to enhance their ability to act as leaders, role models and mentors for those they work with to drive improvement.

Benefits for patients and the UK population

Q will raise the profile of patient leader participants, giving them greater voice and recognition as equal contributors to quality improvement alongside clinicians, managers, researchers, policymakers and others.

Q aims to drive improvement in every part of the health and care system. People who use services can be more confident that the way they are designed and run is informed by leading practice from across the UK.

Through Q, people who understand how to make services better will pool their knowledge and energy, always focused on achieving practical, measureable improvements in health and care.

Benefits for the health and care system

Q will help promote quality improvement within the health and care system, encouraging and supporting a wide range of people to commit to learning the skills needed to effectively lead improvement.

By providing a clear picture of who is currently skilled in improvement (and where), it will be easier to target 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.



Opportunities and activities

What will members in Q do?

Q is largely about supporting people in their existing improvement work, rather than creating extra work or an additional project.

During 2016 and 2017, we are piloting various activities and opportunities enabling and encouraging the community to connect, share and learn. These activities and opportunities will be available UK-wide and are based on the 2015 co-design work.

Some of the opportunities and activities are self-organised by members and promoted to the community including:

- self-organised communities of practice, such as groups that have been set up for anaesthetists and people working in Community Healthcare Providers
- Site visits to places such as a Nissan factory
- A LinkedIn group

Existing centrally organised activities and opportunities include:

- A public facing [Q online directory](#)
- National events to enable members to connect, share, learn from others and enhance their improvement skills
- The opportunity to make connections with other members of the community through Randomised Coffee Trials

Over coming months other ways of enabling and encouraging the community to connect, share and learn will be piloted.

Opportunities and activities within the Q community are currently promoted through a monthly e-newsletter. We are looking to identify an online solution that will support this function and enable members to connect, share and collaborate.

What are improvement labs?

'Improvements labs' are a proposed opportunity we are scoping as part of Q. We envisage there will be a small number of physical spaces across the UK, where members of the Q community come together, facilitated by a small team with specialist skills, to make progress on complex challenges facing the health and care system. Labs will pool and build on the knowledge and expertise of the Q community and draw in ideas from a range of disciplines to enable progress on complex challenges.

We are continuing the design of labs together with members of the community and anticipate the first lab going live in 2017.



Joining the community

Who is Q for?

Q is intended to attract people with understanding and experience of improvement, and commitment to learning collaboratively to improve health and care.

Part of the unique proposition of Q is the diverse range of people involved and part of the community. We are bringing together people at the front line of care, managers, researchers, patient leaders and policymakers. In future, we hope Q will attract and involve people with improvement skills from other sectors.

Members need to address selection criteria as part of joining Q. While the community will be highly diverse, setting criteria is intended to ensure those who join a shared understanding of improvement in relation to our health and care system. The people who join Q need to be committed to collaborative learning and see value in learning from a diverse network.

How do I join Q?

We will be starting to grow the community from the summer of 2016. The opportunities to apply will be phased to ensure we can give proper attention to the large number of people expected to join. In the summer, as part of a pilot, applicants will be open to those with improvement expertise who:

- bring a patient's or carer's perspective and are working predominately at a national level
- the alumni of a number of identified improvement courses and
- those working in identified national organisations.

We will be opening recruitment more widely from autumn 2016 and we are working with regional improvement organisations as part of the process.



What are the selection criteria and why are they important?

We worked together with the founding cohort and others to develop selection criteria for joining Q. The decision to have selection criteria was made after much debate. It is there to ensure those who join share an understanding of improvement and able to contribute equally.

Q has been designed particularly for those committed to collaborative improvement - the curious who see value in learning from a professionally and geographically diverse network.

The criteria applicants will need to address is:

- 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 a role in efforts to improve quality across boundaries
- ability to articulate and reflect on the approaches used personally and by others involved in improving quality.

How much does it cost to join Q?

There is no membership fee to join the Q community. Travel and expenses are not covered by Q.

Will those not in paid employment have contributions to expenses?

There will be times where we will cover the travel and out of pocket expenses in relation to Q activities for those who are not in paid employment. This will need to be pre-approved and in line with the Health Foundation expenses policy.

Do you have a question you think should be captured on our FAQs? Please email the project team via Q@health.org.uk