



Joining Q – summer 2016

Application guidance

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What is Q?

Q is an initiative connecting people with improvement expertise across the UK.

Q's mission is to foster continuous and sustainable improvement in health and care. To achieve this, we are creating opportunities for people in the Q community to come together to share ideas, enhance their skills and collaborate on improvement projects.

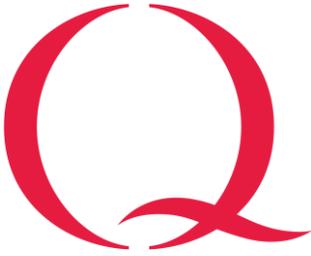
Q is a long-term initiative aiming to support individuals, their improvement work, their employing organisations and the wider population. It has been designed to complement and enhance other initiatives, networks and programmes. People in the community will pool together their knowledge, insights and connections – encouraging collaborative ways of making improvements.

There are currently 231 members of the community, made up of a diverse range of people including people at the front line of health and social care, patient leaders, managers, researchers, policymakers and more. This enhances the power of the initiative as a source of innovation and ability to solve problems with a wide range of perspectives.

The community is growing – over the coming years we envisage Q will become a community of thousands of people with improvement expertise.

The model for Q was designed collaboratively with its 231 founding members. This has helped ensure Q is genuinely complementary and value adding for the diverse range of people with improvement expertise. Q will continue to evolve – being shaped as the community grows.

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



Why should you become a Q member?

People who join Q will join a diverse community of other improvers – a ‘home’ to turn to for inspiration and support. Q provides ways for members to learn, share and get advice from a wider network of peers, offering flexible development in a way that taught courses aren’t easily able to provide.

There is no membership fee or minimum time commitment. Q is designed to help support busy people with their current improvement work and ongoing development and to promote their visibility as a leader of improvement.

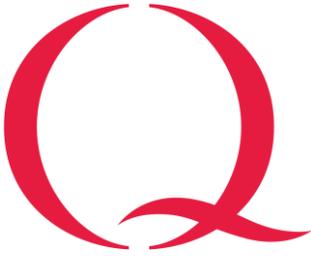
Members are added to [Q’s online directory](#), hosted and promoted by the Health Foundation. For those who join as part of the pilot phase over summer 2016, we will be providing access to online resources – [Institute for Healthcare \(IHI\) Open School Online Courses](#) and [BMJ Quality](#).

There will be opportunities for sharing ideas, enhancing skills and collaborating on improvement projects, based on what the founding members identified as most useful. This will include Do-It-Yourself online resources, networking events nationally and locally, masterclasses and exchange activities (including site visits). Some of these are designed and organised through the central team, while others are managed through regional improvement organisations or self-organised by members.

Q is relatively new, with some of the activities and opportunities still being designed. During 2016 and 2017 we will be piloting activities together with members to ensure they genuinely add value. These will include:

- regional and national events to support face-to-face collaboration and learning
- ways to connect and share ideas and access resources online
- opportunities for peer-to-peer learning (for example exchanges and study visits)
- opportunities to mobilise around areas of common interest through ‘improvement labs’. Q improvement labs will enable members and others from across the UK to collaborate on improvement priorities, enabling great ideas to spread quickly and allowing innovative solutions to be designed and tested at scale.

For more information, visit the [Health Foundation website](#).



Participating in Q

The success of Q is largely dependent on the community. Some members will take a more active role in the community, while others not as much. Members involvement will vary over time. There are some core requirements and commitments that all members make by joining.

- Take Q back to their work place and share and spread learning beyond Q.
- Contribute to building relationships and networks, by attending events when possible or engaging on social media, or with Q-municate (e-newsletter).
- Keep profiles on the online directory up to date
- Participate in the evaluation of Q, when possible, helping to design the community as it grows and develops.

Q members are polite and respectful, but constructively challenge and provide feedback to their peers to help them build on ideas. We ask members to share what they are doing to improve quality with others in the community as well as being open to new ideas.

Who can apply?

Opportunities to join the community will be phased.

The first phase of Q began in spring 2015, when 231 founding members were recruited to help design and test Q. More information can be found in [‘Building Q – learning from designing a large-scale improvement community’](#).

Summer 2016

This next phase of growing the community is a pilot. We have identified a small number of people to apply over the summer, ahead of wider recruitment opportunities taking place from the autumn. The second phase of Q will be open from 21 July to 18 August 2016.

Opportunities to join Q will be open to patient leaders, the alumni of selected improvement courses and employees of national organisations. There is no cap on numbers.

Patient leaders

We recognise the crucial importance the perspectives of patients and carers bring to improvement work. As part of the summer application phase, applications are open to those who bring a patient or carer’s perspective and are working predominately at a national level. Patient leaders whose work is focused locally or regionally are encouraged to apply from autumn 2016.



Alumni of improvement courses

We have identified a number of improvement courses to focus on for phase two recruitment. We have drawn on work previously undertaken at the Health Foundation to identify a list of courses in the field of improvement.

Summer 2016 improvement courses	
Quality Improvement	University of Dundee
Advancing Quality Improvement in Health and Social Care	Teesside University
Leadership for Health Services Improvement	University of Birmingham
Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care	University of Southampton
Integrated Service Improvement: Health and Social Care	University of Edinburgh
Transformational Leadership in Health and Social Care	Teesside University
Practice Development and Innovation	Canterbury Christ Church University
Leading Innovation for Clinical Practitioners	University of East Anglia
Quality and Safety in Healthcare	Imperial College London
Innovation and Improvement Science	Lancaster University
Improvement Science	University of West London / delivered by the CLAHRC for Northwest London
Scottish Quality and Safety Fellowship	NHS Scotland
Skills Improvement Programme	NHS Scotland



Generation Q	The Health Foundation
Quality Improvement Fellows	The Health Foundation
Leaders for Change	The Health Foundation
Improvement Science	The Health Foundation
Health Foundation Leadership Fellows	The Health Foundation

Employees of identified national organisations

A number of national organisations have been identified for summer recruitment, as they would not fit naturally into a regionally based roll-out process. Members who have an understanding of national efforts to improve quality will provide important insight and support for the Q community and can help influence the context within which local improvement work takes place. Those who are working predominately in the national office of the identified organisations are eligible to apply in this phase.

Summer 2016 national organisations
NHS England
NHS Improvement
Department of Health (England)
Public Health Wales
Welsh Government
Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate



HSC Safety Forum (NI)
Care Quality Commission
Government of Northern Ireland

Autumn 2016

The third phase will start from autumn 2016. Phase three will be open to anyone who feels they meet the criteria and will take place in waves of several regions at a time, with people able to apply depending on where they are based in the UK.



Completing the application form: Registering your application

All candidates must complete an application form. Applications will be assessed by people experienced in improvement.

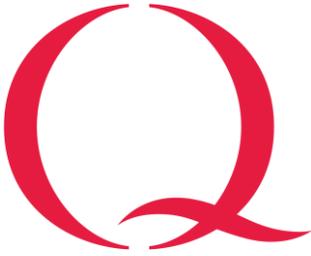
Your application will be submitted through the Health Foundation [AIMS portal](#). More information on how to register your application can be found on the [Health Foundation website](#).

Full guidance on accessing, completing and submitting your application via AIMS can be found in the user manual. We recommend that you keep a copy of this manual to hand to refer to while you complete your application. We also want to particularly highlight the following.

- When registering for an account in AIMS please ensure you register as an **individual** applying rather than as an organisation. Please note that the email you register and apply with will receive all communication regarding the application, so please ensure you have registered with the relevant email address.
- The form does not need to be completed in one session. It is possible to save your progress and return to the form at a later date. You can download the form into Word and work on it there if you find that easier, but we will require the final submission through the AIMS system.
- A number of questions in the application form are mandatory and the form cannot be submitted until these are completed. Mandatory questions are marked with a red asterisk (*) and a tick will appear beside the section name on the tab once all mandatory questions have been completed. The index page will also indicate which sections are incomplete. If you try to submit your form without having completed all the mandatory questions then you will be prompted to return to one or more sections.
- Some questions have a character limit, for which we have provided an approximate word limit. Please adhere to the word limit. If you are unsure about the length of your response, we suggest drafting your answer in a Word or similar document first so that you can check the count and make edits before pasting it into the application form.

Please complete the application as per the instructions on the form for each question.

The deadline for applications is **23.59 (BST) on Thursday 18 August 2016. We will not accept submissions after this date.**



As this will be one of the first times we have used the system, we would be interested to receive your feedback on how you found the process and if there are any areas for improvement. Please send your feedback to AIMS@health.org.uk

FAQs

A list of Frequently Asked Questions can be found via the [Health Foundation website](#).

Additional questions regarding the application should be emailed to joiningQ@health.org.uk. Your email subject line should be '**Q application question**'. We will initially respond to your query by email.

Application key dates

Open for applications	21 July 2016
Deadline for applications	18 August 2016, 23:59 (BST)
Applicants to be informed of final decision	Week commencing 26 September 2016



Completing the application form: Section 1 – About you

This section asks you to provide details about you and your application.

Some of the information in this section will be used to update the Q online member directory if you are successful. We encourage members to update their details in the online directory on a regular basis.

The information in this section will be visible to the assessors but will not be taken into account in the assessment of your application.

Applicant details and contact information

Section 1 asks for your last name, first name and title to complete your application details.

Contact details (preferred contact address, telephone or mobile number and email address) should be completed so the Q project team can contact you with the outcome of your application and with regular communications about Q.

If successful, your email address will also be used so members can contact you via an online message form through the online directory. Your email address will not be visible to the public.

Social media details

Please provide your twitter handle and/or LinkedIn URL. These details will be shared on the Q online directory if your application is successful. This will help us to raise the profile of you and your improvement work and help you connect with others in the community.

Phase 2 application category

Please indicate whether you are applying as an alumnus of one of the identified improvement courses, a patient leader working predominately at a national level or an employee of one of the eligible national organisations.

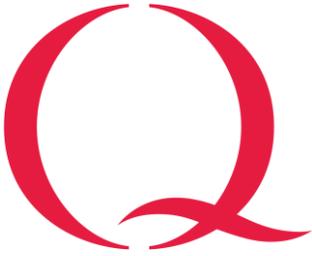
Professional background

We ask for this information to help us get an understanding of the diversity of the Q community. By providing this information you are helping us to continue the design of Q to support the varied skills and professions that make up its membership.



Your areas of interest

We ask for this information to help the Q community share and collaborate easily. Please provide a brief summary of your improvement interests, separating each area of interest with a semi-colon (;). This will be shared on the online directory to help you to connect and collaborate with members with similar interests. You will be able to edit these details on the online directory after joining if your application is successful. You have a 100-word limit.



Completing the application form: Section 2 – About your work

Please provide details of your current work and role(s). This information is important help us understand who is in the community and continue to design Q to benefit its diverse range of members.

Some of the information in this section will be used to update the Q online member directory if you are successful.

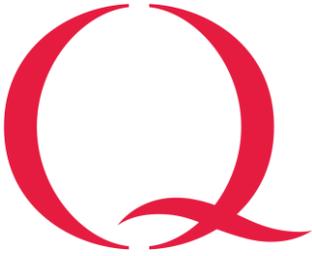
The information in this section will be visible to the assessors but will not be taken into account in the assessment of your application.

Job title

Please provide us with your current job title, or the title that you feel best reflects your role if you are working on a voluntary basis. This will be visible on the Q online member directory if your application is successful.

Current primary role and other roles

We understand people will have more than one role so we have provided space for you to tell us more. Please indicate your roles and the settings in which you work / volunteer.



Completing the application form: Section 3 – About your place of work

Please provide details of the organisation you currently work with or are employed by. If you work on a voluntary basis please provide details of the organisation you are associated with to improve the quality of health and care (if applicable).

This information will help us understand which and how many organisations have connections through Q, and the overall balance of people we are attracting to join.

Some of the information in this section will be used to update the Q online member directory if you are successful.

The information in this section will be visible to the assessors but will not be taken into account in the assessment of your application.

Name of primary organisation

Please provide the name of the organisation with which you work most closely to improve quality. Your primary organisation may not be the one you are employed by, particularly if you work in improvement on a voluntary basis. This will be visible on the Q online member directory if your application is successful.

Organisation location

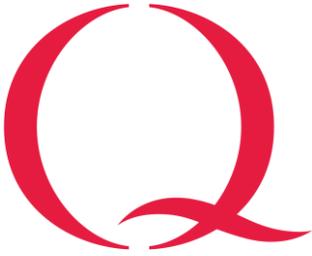
Please indicate whether the organisation you have listed is located in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales.

Associated regional area

Please use the location of your named primary organisation and the maps in Appendix 1 to select the associated area covered by the Academic Health Science Networks (in England), Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trust, Welsh Local Health Board or Scottish Health Board.

Type of organisation

Please indicate what type of organisation.



Completing the application form: Section 4 – Your commitment, knowledge and experience

Your responses to questions 1, 2 and 3 in this section will be used in the assessment process.

We are looking for people who have a considered and lived commitment to collaborative improvement. Applicants should be able to articulate and reflect on the approaches used personally and by others involved in improving quality. Those applying should also have experience of playing an influential role in efforts to improve quality across boundaries.

QUESTION 1: COMMITMENT

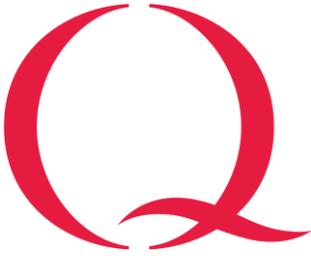
Please tell us why you want to join Q and why you are committed to improving the quality of health and care in the UK.

APPLICANT GUIDANCE:

You should explain why you are committed to improving health and care in the UK and specifically about collaborating with others from different backgrounds to do so. Please describe what you hope to gain through being part of Q and how you expect to contribute to collaboration and sharing with the community.

You should reflect on how Q can help build your improvement capability, as well as others'. There is no minimum time commitment expected of Q members and your response will not be assessed on your capacity to engage with Q. We recognise your capacity to get involved will vary over time. Generally speaking, the more time and engagement you are able to commit to Q, the more you are likely to get from it.

You have a 500-word limit.



QUESTION 2: KNOWLEDGE

What does improving quality mean to you?

APPLICANT GUIDANCE:

You should explain what you understand by the term quality improvement. Please explain what you have learnt about the ways in which quality can be improved and reflect on barriers to successfully improving quality.

You should explain how you have developed the knowledge you have about improvement, which may be through structured or on the job learning or through other ways.

You have a 500-word limit.

QUESTION 3: EXPERIENCE

Please describe your experience of improvement and explain what you achieved and learned through the experience.

APPLICANT GUIDANCE:

Please include at least one example where you have played an influential role in efforts to improve the quality of health and care that went beyond a single team.

Your influence may have come through a range of different types of contributions. For example, you may have been the formal lead for the work, been involved as the sponsor, or contributed to the design or evaluation of the work. Your influence may have come through providing input in specific areas such as patient and public involvement, data and research analysis or stakeholder engagement. If you have experience from other sectors that you feel is relevant, please also include it here.

You should reflect briefly on how you worked with others and what you achieved and learned through this experience.

You have a 500-word limit.



Submitting the application and next steps

Once you have completed sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 you will be able to submit your application.

Declaration

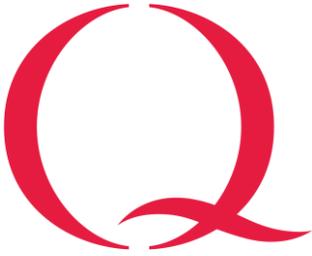
Prior to submitting the form you will be asked to consent to the following:

- The information you have provided in the form can be used in the processing and review of the application and in any other legitimate activity of the Foundation. This may include designing the Q community with our regional partners and Q activities.
- The information to be used (where indicated) to populate the Q online member directory.
- Participation in the evaluation of Q. The evaluation helps to ensure the community is delivering its aims and making a difference to the scale and pace of improving quality across the UK.

The declaration also asks you to indicate whether or not you are able to attend the Q welcome event scheduled for Thursday 20 October, if successful. Your availability to attend will not affect the assessment of your application. It is to help us plan for the event.

Marketing information

Please help us to monitor the effectiveness of our communications activities by letting us know where you heard about Q.



Application assessment and outcome

Summer 2016 applications will be assessed by people experienced in improvement. Each application will be assessed on your responses to questions 1, 2 and 3 in section 4. Once all applications have been assessed you will be notified by email of the outcome of your application. Please check your junk email folder to make sure you receive the outcome of your application.

Successful applications

Successful applications will be notified by email and further details will be provided shortly after, including an invitation to attend a welcome event on Thursday 20 October in London.

Applications with a development need

Applications are assessed on your reflection and demonstration of your commitment, knowledge and experience of improving health and care. An unsuccessful application may be due to a development need; if your application is unsuccessful we encourage you to join the community at a later stage. We will provide brief feedback on your application.



Appendix 1: Regional Q communities

England – Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs)

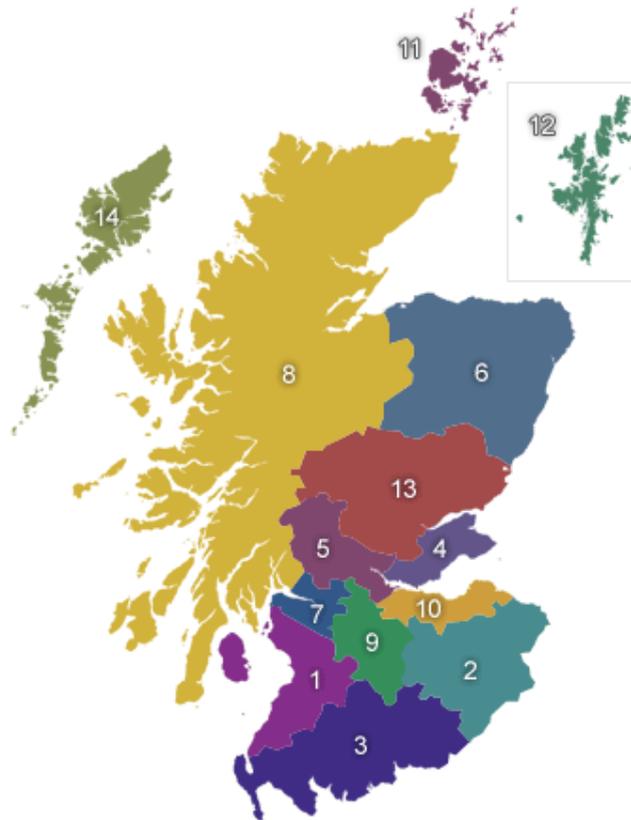
If you are based primarily in England please select your associated AHSN.





Scotland – Health Boards

If you are based primarily in Scotland please select your associated Health Board.



- 1 NHS Arran and Ayrshire
- 2 NHS Borders
- 3 NHS Dumfries and Galloway
- 4 NHS Fife
- 5 NHS Forth Valley
- 6 NHS Grampian
- 7 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- 8 NHS Highland
- 9 NHS Lanarkshire
- 10 NHS Lothian
- 11 NHS Orkney
- 12 NHS Shetland
- 13 NHS Tayside
- 14 NHS Western Isles



Northern Ireland – Health and Social Care Trusts

If you are based primarily in Northern Ireland please select your associated Health and Social Care Trust.





Wales – Local Health Boards

If you are based primarily in Wales please select your associated Local Health Board.

