



Joining Q – November 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 to come together to create a community and share ideas, enhance skills and collaborate on improvement projects.

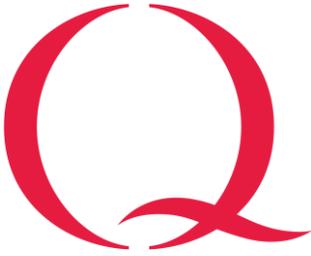
Q is a long-term initiative aiming to support individuals, their improvement work, their employing organisations and the wider population. It has been designed to complement and enhance other initiatives, networks and programmes.

There are currently 447 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, commissioners, 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 231 founding members. This has helped ensure it 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.

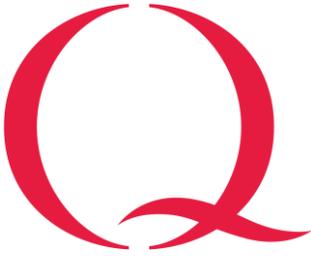
Members are added to [Q’s online directory](#), which in future will be hosted and promoted on a separate Q website and we will be providing access to online resources – [Institute for Healthcare \(IHI\) Open School Online Courses](#), [BMJ Quality](#) and membership to the [Institute for Continuous Improvement in Public Services](#).

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

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

- 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 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 [Q 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 less so and we expect individual 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 is built around the values of collaboration, shared decision making and openness, reflecting the community's commitment to patient centredness and multidisciplinary ways of working. 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.

At present there is a 'Q compact' being co-developed by members to describe the expectations of those in the community and to nurture a creative environment for learning and improvement. Eventually all members will be encouraged to sign up to this. The compact is intended to describe our ways of working together and help communicate the values of Q.

When can I apply?

Opportunities to join the community will be phased across the UK.

Design and piloting Q recruitment

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](#).

The second phase of growing the community was a targeted pilot that ran in the summer of this year. From four groups of people 216 new members joined Q in October 2016.

November 2016

The next phase will be open to anyone who feels they meet the criteria and will take place in waves of different areas of the UK at a time, with people able to apply depending on their



location. The November 2016 opportunity will be open to anyone who works/volunteers to improve health and care in the following areas covered by the below Academic Health Science Networks:

- West of England AHSN area
- South West England AHSN area
- North East and North Cumbria AHSN area.

In March 2017 we will be looking for people working/volunteering in:

Scotland
Yorkshire and Humber area
North East and North Central London area
North West Coast area
West Midlands area.

People in Wales and Northern Ireland as well as other areas of England will be able to join from May 2017.

Please sign up for notifications on the [Health Foundation website](#) to find out when we will be recruiting in your area.

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.

Application key dates

Open for applications:	Thursday 3 November 2016
Deadline for applications:	Monday 5 December 2016, 23:59 (GMT)
Applicants to be informed of final decision:	Week commencing 6 February 2017



Completing the application form: Registering your application

All candidates must complete an application form. Applications will be assessed by people experienced in improvement from a range of different backgrounds.

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 guide](#). 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.
- 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 (and will allow you to spell check your application). 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 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 (GMT) on Monday 5 December 2016. We cannot accept submissions after this date.**

Our online application system is relatively new and it would be helpful to receive your feedback on how you found the process and any areas for improvement. Please send your feedback to AIMS@health.org.uk



Completing the application form: Section 1 – About you

Some of the information in this section will be used to update the Q online directory if you are successful. We encourage members to update their details in the microsite 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 to enable members to contact you via an online message form through the microsite directory. Your email address will not be publicly visible.

Social media details

Please provide your Twitter handle and/or LinkedIn URL. These details will be shared on the 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.

Application category

Please indicate whether you are applying from West of England, South West England or North East and North Cumbria. Maps can be found in this guidance document (pages 17–19) to help you select a region.

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. We can also identify gaps within the community and proactively try and increase the diversity.

Your areas of interest

We ask for this information to help the 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. You will be able to edit these details on the 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 to 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 online directory if you are successful.

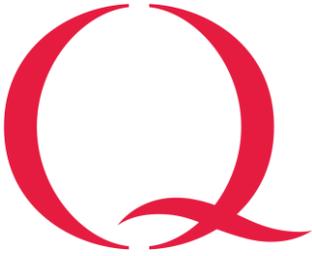
Some of the information in this section will be visible to the assessors.

Job title

Please provide us with your current job title, or a brief title you feel best reflects your role if you are working on a voluntary basis. This will be visible on the online 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 main 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 attracted to join.

This information in this section will be used to update the online directory if you are successful.

Some of the information in this section will be visible to the assessors.

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 online directory if your application is successful.

Type of organisation

Please indicate what type of organisation it is.



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

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

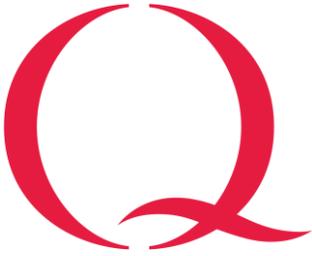
General guidance: Responding to the assessment questions

We are looking for people who have experience, knowledge and commitment to the collaborative improvement of health and care. 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 a role in efforts to improve quality across team boundaries.

It is very important that your responses to the three assessment questions have sufficient detail in order for the assessors to make a recommendation. It is advised you make use of the full word limit.

Assessors will need to see evidence and reflection in your responses. To help you respond to the questions, guidance is provided regarding what should be reflected in each response. Please use this guidance to make sure you have fully answered the requirements of the question.

We hope a diverse range of people who work/volunteer to improve health and care apply to join Q. We do not expect everyone to have the same level of experience or knowledge, however those with limited improvement experience or with limited knowledge of the different approaches to improving health and care may not be ready to join Q at the moment. The assessors will be looking for applicants to reflect on the value of their experience and how they can contribute to the community, as well as a detailed response regarding the variety of ways the applicant has gained an understanding of the different approaches for improving health and care.



QUESTION 1: EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

What has been your experience and understanding of improvement to date?

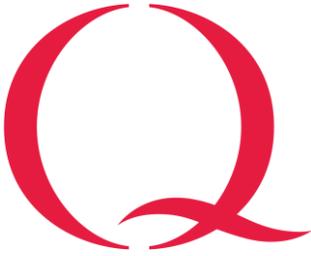
APPLICANT GUIDANCE:

In your response you should reflect on the following:

1. Q is looking for people with some established experience, rather than those who are just starting out, so please provide a brief overview of the improvement activities you've been involved in and what you are currently doing. When responding to the question you can draw on experience from your whole career and from voluntary as well as paid work, within the health system and beyond.
2. In your response to this question explain what you understand by the term improvement and how you developed your understanding and knowledge of improvement (whether it was through structured or on-the-job learning or through other ways).

We hope to attract to Q people with many different sorts of experience, from front-line staff who've been directly involved in improvement projects to analysts, researchers, patient leaders and senior leaders who play an influential role in supporting such work. We also welcome people whose experience has been at the regional or national level, involved in centrally run improvement initiatives (including third sector and community led campaigns) or creating a supportive environment for improvement efforts

You have a 500-word limit.



QUESTION 2: EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Thinking about one specific example of improvement work you were involved in, what did you contribute and what did you learn?

APPLICANT GUIDANCE:

In your response you should reflect on the following:

1. Please describe specifically what you did and how you worked with others involved.
2. We are looking for people whose contribution to an improvement project was influential to the process or outcomes, although that need not mean you were formally in charge. If you can describe the outcomes from the work for colleagues, patients or the public, please include that.
3. We are looking for Q members who worked on improvement activities that spanned multiple teams. When providing your response please reflect on the additional challenges and opportunities cross-team experience brings.
4. We know not all improvement efforts succeed, so also tell us about the limits to what you achieved. Q needs people who are able to openly share both what's going well and not so well, so we will value evidence of honest reflection and of learning from what you did.

You have a 500-word limit.

QUESTION 3: COMMITMENT

Why do you want to join Q?

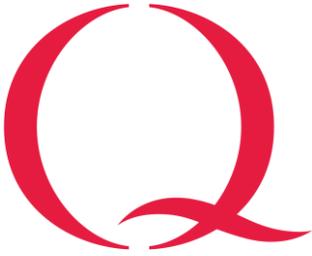
APPLICANT GUIDANCE:

In your response you should reflect on the following:

1. We are looking for people who have thought about what it could mean to be involved in Q. Consider what you hope to give to – as well as get from – the community, for the ultimate benefit of sustainable improvement in health and care.

Q will be particularly suited to people who are energised by learning and collaborating with others from many different backgrounds and are committed to this being part of how they achieve benefits for their organisations and the populations they serve.

There's no minimum time commitment expected from members and you may not know exactly what opportunities will come up through your involvement in the community. Indeed,



your involvement in Q is likely to change over time depending on your other commitments. While you don't need to be very specific about what you will do, assessors want to get a sense that you have understood what Q is about and intend to bring time, energy, ideas or influence to the community.

You have a 500-word limit.



Submitting your application

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 Health Foundation. This may include sharing information with our Q partners.
- The information to be used (where indicated) to populate the online 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. RAND Europe will contact those who have submitted an application to complete a survey to help us better understand the diversity of those applying to Q.
- Subscribing to the Health Foundation newsletter if successful so that you can be informed about the wider work of the Health Foundation and other opportunities which may be of interest to you and your improvement work. You can opt out of receiving the newsletter via email or the Health Foundation website.

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

The dates and locations of the Q welcome events are:

Wednesday 29 March 2017, Aztec West, Bristol (West of England)

Wednesday 29 March 2017, Central Exeter (South West England)

Late March 2017, venue tbc (North East and North Cumbria)

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

November 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 ensure that you have correctly typed your email address into your application form as this address will be used to notify you of the outcome of your application. Please check your junk email folder to make sure you receive the outcome of your application.

Successful applications

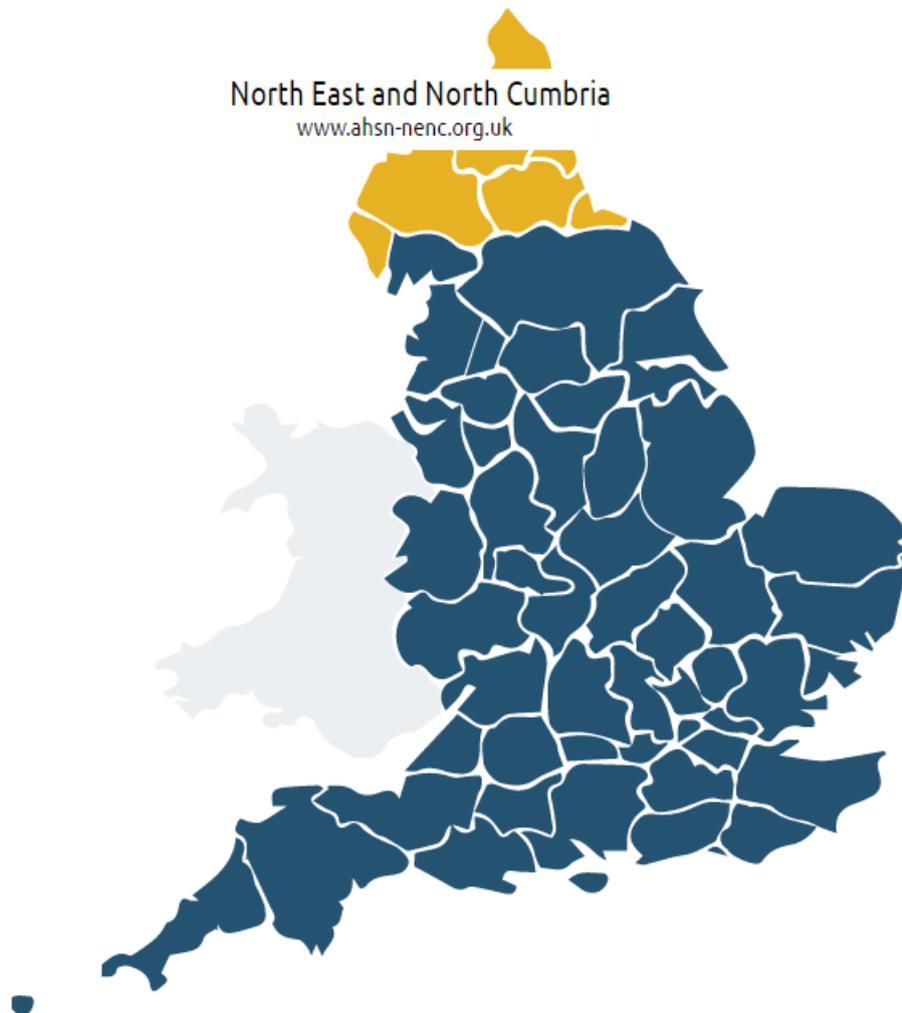
Successful applicants will be notified by email week commencing 13 February 2017 and further details will be provided shortly after.

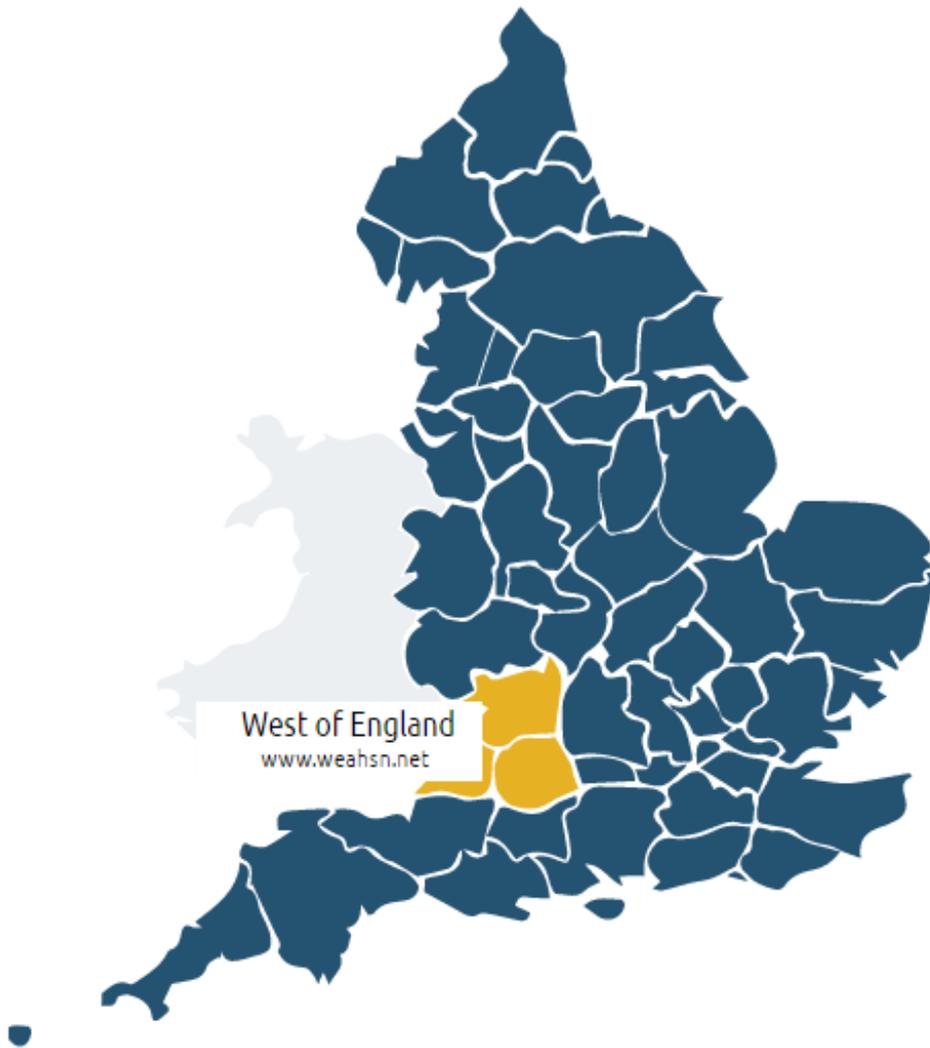
Applications with a development need

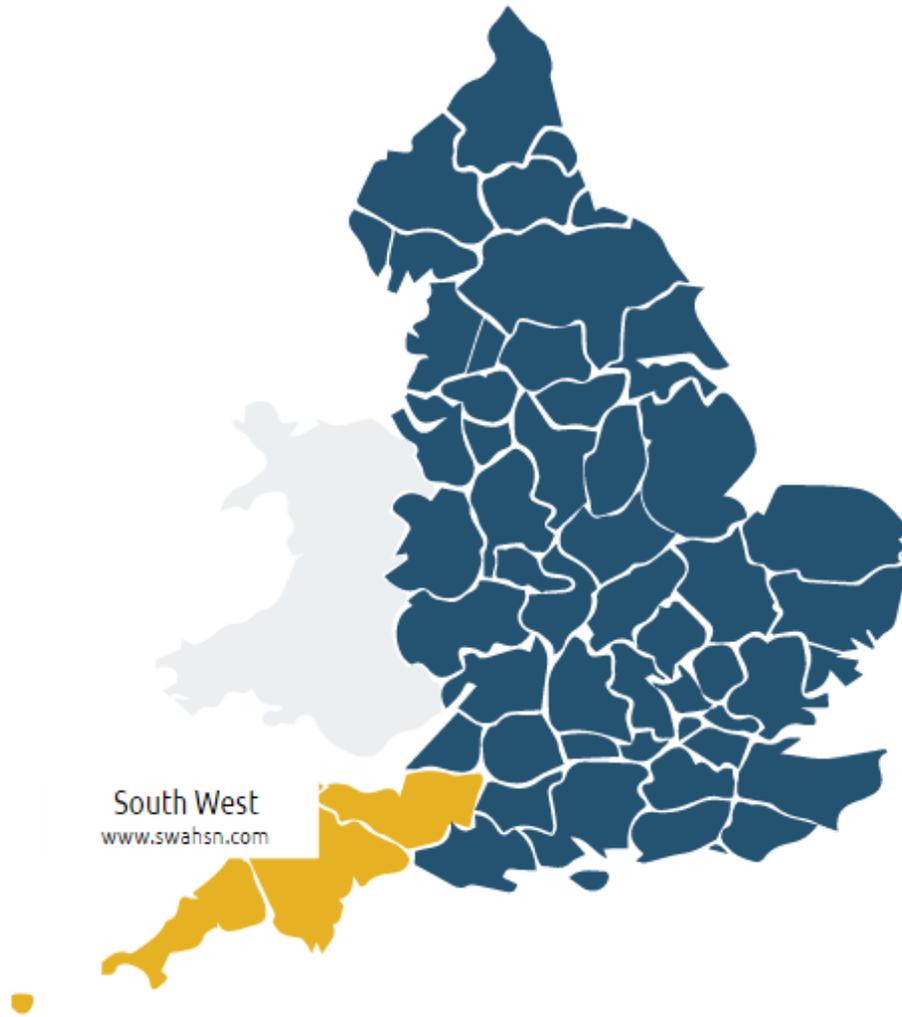
Applications are assessed on your reflection and demonstration of your experience, knowledge and commitment to improving health and care. An unsuccessful application may be due to a development need. If your application is unsuccessful we encourage you to apply to join the community at a later stage.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



November 2016 recruitment areas







South West
www.swahsn.com