



What is Q?

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

Q stands for *Quality* as defined by the Institute of Medicine: *
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.

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 and form a community – sharing ideas, enhancing skills and collaborating to make health and care better.

Q is a long-term initiative aiming to support individuals and their improvement work. Through this, Q benefits members' organisations and the populations they serve. It has been designed to complement and enhance other initiatives and networks. People in the community pool together their knowledge, insights and connections – encouraging collaborative ways of making improvements.

The Q community is made of up a diverse range of people, including those at the front line of health and social care, patient leaders, managers, researchers, policymakers and others. This boosts the power of Q as a source of innovation and practical problem solving by including a wide range of perspectives.

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

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

It is not a taught programme, but a network of support for those already knowledgeable in and undertaking improvement work. There is no membership fee to join. People in the community have the flexibility to participate in ways that fit with their lives and their improvement priorities.

The model for Q was designed together with 231 founding members. This helps ensure Q is genuinely helpful to the diverse range of people leading improvement. Q will continue to evolve – being shaped with the community as it grows.

This is an exciting time to join as we begin to pilot a variety of activities and opportunities. Some of these will be led by the Health Foundation, with others led by members and partner organisations.

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

'If [Q] succeeds, the NHS in the UK will be leading the world in creating, at national scale, system-wide capacities for improvement'

– Professor Don Berwick



Why Q?

Our health and care system is facing major challenges, with the need to improve at significant scale and pace and in the face of considerable financial pressures. To achieve this, enhancing the ability of the system to identify and respond to innovative ideas is critical.

Over the past decades, thousands of people in health and care have been trained in structured approaches to improvement. There are also many people with formal training who are leading improvements.

Q is creating ways to surface, support, develop, connect and mobilise people to help maximise their impact and accelerate improvement. It is providing a long-term 'home' for cross-boundary learning and change.

A group of people are gathered around a table in a bright, sunlit room, likely a conference or networking event. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair is smiling broadly, wearing a dark blazer and a name tag that reads "Q member CLARE". To her right, another woman with dark hair is also smiling. In the background, other people are visible, some holding white cards. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

'The networking opportunity and time to think about QI cannot be underestimated – we all have busy lives and jobs, but in order to be the best we can be we need to invest our time and energy with others designing and shaping the future we want to lead.'

– Q member



How will Q complement other work?

Q has been designed to complement other local, regional and national improvement initiatives and networks.

Members of Q will likely have existing and valued connections with other networks and initiatives. Many of these tend to be focused on a particular profession, geography, subject area or time-limited project.

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 opportunities to learn
- 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 being part of the Q community?

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 are genuinely value-adding. Individual activities and the portfolio as a whole will continue to evolve in line with feedback from the community.



How is Q benefitting health and care more widely?

Benefits for patients and the UK population

- Q gives those who bring the patient and public perspective a greater voice and recognition as equally valued improvers, alongside those at the front line of care, managers, researchers, policymakers and others.
- Through Q, people who understand how to make health and care services better are pooling their knowledge and energy, with a focus on achieving practical, measureable improvements.
- Q aims to foster improvement in every part of the health and care system. The ambition is for people who use services to be more confident that the way they are designed and run is informed by best practice from across the UK.

Benefits for employers

- Q will create time-efficient ways for members to draw on the expertise of others to help accelerate work on improvement challenges. It ensures organisations are accessing the best ideas and a range of experts from across the UK and, in future, internationally.

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- 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, encouraging a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
 - The online Q directory helps employers identify who has skills and a passion for improvement.

Benefits for the health and care system

- Q will help promote improvement within the health and care system, 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 the coming years, ‘improvement labs’ 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.



'It has helped build a local network of like-minded people, and made that community stronger. We now meet and are able to pool resources.'

– Employer of a Q member

How can people join Q?

After recruiting an initial 231 founding members to help collaboratively design and test Q during 2015, we are now beginning to grow the community further. The long-term ambition is to have a community of thousands of improvers.

We need to ensure we grow the community in a manageable way so we can continue to design and encourage an evolving initiative that meets the needs of its members. Therefore, we are phasing how we grow this large-scale community.

The next stage of growing the community is a pilot. We have identified a small number of people to apply, ahead of wider opportunities to join taking place from the autumn of 2016. As part of this stage, opportunities will be open to:

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

Those interested will need to address criteria reflecting their **commitment** to, **experience** of and **expertise** in collaborative improvement. Many people are involved in improvement in different ways, and we expect people will address these three areas in different ways and with a diverse range of perspectives.

Opportunities to apply as part of this early phase will be available via the Health Foundation website for four weeks from 21 July until 18 August.

Other improvers will be able to apply from the autumn of 2016. We will be rotating the opportunity to apply across different parts of the UK (timings will be available in August 2016), working in partnership with regionally based organisations.



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

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

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

About NHS Improvement

Q was born out of the Patient Safety portfolio of NHS England. In April 2016, the patient safety function transferred to NHS Improvement.

NHS Improvement is responsible for overseeing foundation trusts, NHS trusts and independent providers. We offer the support these providers need to give patients consistently safe, high quality, compassionate care within local health systems that are financially sustainable. By holding providers to account and, where necessary, intervening, we help the NHS to meet its short-term challenges and secure its future.

NHS Improvement is the operational name for an organisation that brings together Monitor, NHS TDA, Patient Safety, the National Reporting and Learning System, the Advancing Change team and the Intensive Support Teams.

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