The improvement journey

Developing an organisational approach to improvement in health care is a journey that can take several years. Here are six key steps:

1. **Assessing readiness**
   How ready is your organisation for improvement, in terms of its learning climate, infrastructure, governance and leadership? Tools are available to help you assess your readiness and address any gaps.

2. **Securing board support**
   The board must be confident in and committed to the organisation’s improvement strategy and to building the skills and infrastructure needed. A strong clinical voice at board level can help make improvement a priority.

3. **Securing wider organisational buy-in and creating a vision**
   Staff at all levels need the permission and time to engage in improvement. Consider building in stages, starting with enthusiasts then encouraging others to follow.

4. **Developing improvement skills and infrastructure**
   Teams will need the capability and resources to support improvement. Make sure you have the data and systems needed to measure impact and teams have the necessary skills to use them.

5. **Aligning activity**
   As the improvement programme grows, aligning activity with the organisation’s overall strategy is key. Making sure that clinical, managerial and corporate teams are pulling in the same direction should help overcome barriers to improvement.

6. **Sustaining an organisation-wide approach**
   It takes time for an improvement programme to embed. Maintaining momentum takes as much effort and skill as getting started. The board must stay focused and supportive in the face of external pressures, despite the uneven pace of improvement.

To read the full report visit health.org.uk/improvement-journey