

The Q initiative: learning, connecting and collaborating at scale to improve health and care

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Aims

Q is a national, community-based initiative, aiming to improve health and care quality across the UK. Launched in 2015, led by the Health Foundation and supported and co-funded by NHS Improvement, Q aims to support and enable cross-region, cross-profession learning, collaboration and improvement. Over time, Q aims to recruit thousands of diverse individuals, boosting the collective innovation by including a wide range of perspectives.

Methods

Q uses a network approach to enable and build connections between individuals and group, including online (directories, social media) and offline (participatory workshops and events) methods. We are working through partner organisations to recruit a community of thousands, to develop the capability, capacity and conditions for improvement at scale. Q will help to develop individuals' skills and knowledge for improvement, as well as enabling new ways of mobilising knowledge and making progress on issues – such as through special interest groups and improvement labs. These labs will support Q members and others to come together in a systematic way to make progress on specific topics that are a priority for many across the system. Differing perspectives are encouraged and valued, breaking down hierarchies so that physicians, patients and many others involved in health and care can all work collaboratively to improve health and care.

Results

Q has recruited 447 members to date, including health professionals, patients, commissioners, managers, researchers and policymakers. A total of 35% of Q members (of 219 respondents to surveys distributed by independent evaluators, RAND Europe) report having a medical background. During the first year of Q, members gained on average 10 new connections, with many cross-boundary connections developed. Members have reported a statistically significant

increase in both their self-assessment of ease of access to information and/or resources that they need to do their improvement work, and self-assessment of skills and knowledge for quality improvement. Over 15 special interest groups have been set up focusing on different areas, and the first improvement lab will launch in spring 2017. Members have reported developing meaningful contacts, learning through shared experiences, increased confidence, and a sense of support.

Conclusions

Q is demonstrating that a large-scale network approach holds value for people working in quality improvement. Many examples have been reported regarding new connections and sharing between members; we expect Q to demonstrate further contribution towards improving health and care over time. ■

Conflict of interest statement

None.

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