

Be part of the Q Improvement Lab



Welcome

Welcome to the Q Improvement Lab – an initiative working across the UK offering a bold new approach to making progress on health and care challenges.

The Q Lab brings together organisations and individuals to pool what is known about a topic, uncover new insights and develop and test ideas. We work with people across the health and care system and people with lived experience. Last year almost 200 people contributed time, expertise and experience to the project.

From September 2018, the Q Lab will be working in partnership with Mind - the mental health charity. Together, we will focus on the experiences of people living with both mental health problems and persistent back and neck pain, and how care can be designed to best meet their health and wellbeing needs.

If you have experience or expertise in this topic, we invite you to be part of the Q Lab: to become a Lab participant and contribute your knowledge and understanding, connect with others who have a shared passion for the topic and be part of a purposeful and creative 12-month process.

This document outlines what being a Lab participant entails, what you will get out of it and an overview of the project.

We hope you'll consider being part of this exciting, ambitious initiative.

All the best
The Q Lab



About the Q Improvement Lab

Working on a single challenge for 12 months, the Q Lab brings together organisations and individuals from across the UK to pool what is known about a topic, uncover new insights and develop and test ideas.

Launched in April 2017, the first project explored what it would take for peer support to be more widely available.

The Q Lab is led by the Health Foundation and supported by NHS Improvement.

It is part of the Q community – a growing community connecting people with experience and expertise of improving health and care.



“ What I found really helpful in the workshops were the people who had a design background and their different approach. It was so refreshing - that different approach to problem-solving. I find it really helpful having that different viewpoint and stance at addressing issues. ”

Q Lab participant, 2017

What is a Lab participant?

A Lab participant is an individual (or group of individuals from an organisation) who works with the Q Lab during a 12-month project.

The Q Lab works across geographical, organisational and professional boundaries to bring together a diverse set of people with relevant experience and expertise. As such, Lab participants are critical to the Lab's work.

Lab participants:

- influence and shape the work through sharing their expertise, knowledge and experience
- are well placed to adapt and apply the insights and ideas that they themselves have helped to create
- are diverse and have varied backgrounds in health and care and experiences of the topic
- help share the Lab's outputs and findings with their colleagues and networks.



Lab participants

If you have an interest in the topic, and some expertise and experiences to share, you can become a Lab participant.

There are a number of different roles that you can fulfil and we will design different ways for you to contribute that will be tailored to your interests.

At the start of the project you may not know what contributions will suit you best, however over time this will become clearer.

You will be informed about ways to participate in the work through regular updates. You will then be able to take up offers to contribute based on your level of interest and capacity. The amount of time that you commit will be up to you.

As a minimum we ask that you set aside 15-30 minutes per fortnight to:

- Stay in touch with the work
- Join online conversations
- Meet other Lab participants
- Actively contribute to the work, for example through online surveys or webinars.

There will be some opportunities for you to join discussions and workshops. We will prioritise these invitations in two ways:

- To ensure that we have a good diversity of different perspectives in all face to face sessions
- To prioritise attendance from people who are likely to become (or already are) **core collaborators**. This role is described on the next page.



Lab participants: Core collaborators

Lab participants – for whom the topic is central to their work or expertise, or who have lived experience of the topic – may become core collaborators.

Core collaborators will be a smaller group, consisting of people or organisations who:

- can help to achieve change on the ground, by undertaking or supporting testing
- bring a particularly valuable perspective to the work, for example through lived experience
- can act as ambassadors for the work, sharing and influencing others.

Being a core collaborator is not a formal process; as we learn more about each other, we will work together to see which Lab participants are well placed to become more involved in the project as core collaborators.

Core collaborators will have a clear role and area of work, based on their interest and expertise.

The time commitment required will depend on the area of work. As a minimum core collaborators will:

- commit to attending three key workshops over the year (that will provisionally take place in October, January and July).
- undertake work in the area that you have committed to. During the developing and testing phase this may be between 1-3 hours per week, over a 6-8 week period. This time will usually take place in your local area. If you are in full-time employment, it will relate to your 'day job' rather than being completely additional work.

On becoming a core collaborator, we will discuss what support Q Lab can offer to enable them to fulfil this role.



Benefits of being involved

- ✓ Share your knowledge and experience with others, in an authentic way, and help to improve our collective understanding of the topic.
- ✓ Develop your own knowledge of the topic, as you learn from other Lab participants and our collective insights.
- ✓ Attend engaging workshops, that will expose you to new methods and techniques that you can use in your day-to-day work.
- ✓ Connect with people from different backgrounds and sectors who have a shared passion around the topic.
- ✓ Access an online platform that will support you to make connections and to collaborate with others.
- ✓ Contribute to a bold and exciting initiative, that is seeking to tackle complex problems in health and care.



“ It’s not all academic, it’s not all strategic, it’s also personal ... it’s an opportunity to talk personally. There’s something for everybody, and I think that is a great leveller, if everybody feels that they can understand the topic and contribute. ”

Lab participant, March 2018

What to expect over the next 12-months

| | Research and discovery September - December | Choosing an area of opportunity December - January | Developing and testing ideas January - July | Distilling and sharing July onwards |
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| What we will cover | In this phase we will do initial research on the topic area to build a picture of the current challenges and potential opportunities. The research aims to bring to light new insights from people's experiences and practice. | Following the initial exploratory research, we need to choose an area that we collectively think is amenable to change, and that would allow us to develop and test ideas in practice. This will involve weighing up the benefits of different options, and thinking strategically. | In this phase, our mode of working will change. We will establish small groups of people who are interested in supporting testing. We will run activities that support you to generate and develop ideas, before moving onto early testing (prototyping and simulating ideas) and iterative tests in practice. | In the final phase we will look to support Lab participants to continue the work, including through potential funding programmes such as Q Exchange. We will also bring together our learning and insights to share with others. |
| How you can be involved | The research will be coordinated by the Q Lab team so that you can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your knowledge • Host or undertake research activities (including through workshops, site visits and focus groups) • Prioritise areas for future work. | Working collectively we will identify suitable areas and select one to take forward. You will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise areas of work • Share your knowledge about the barriers and enablers that we should be aware of. | If you are interested and able to support testing, then in this phase you can become a core collaborator. This will involve a higher commitment of time and energy from you to support change in your own context. Your involvement will be supported by the Q Lab team, who will coordinate work between testing groups. | We will have individual and collective responsibility to continue the work of the Q Lab, whether that is based on testing that has already taken place or embedding learning in another area of work. Working collectively we will surface our shared learning on the topic area. |
| What we will achieve together | Together we will have surfaced new insights on the topic that contribute to our overall understanding. These will be useful for both the project and for others who are interested in the topic. | Together we will have identified and selected an area of opportunity. This will have involved testing and validating this area with a range of people who would like to collaborate with us in the developing and testing phase. | Together we will undertake a range of testing activities, in order to support change in our area of opportunity. Throughout the testing phase we will seek to bring together any generalisable learning so that we can make recommendations for future opportunities. | Together we will have momentum and energy for change, with plans for how some of the work can continue beyond the 12-month Lab process. We will aim to share what has been learned with others who could benefit from our experiences. |
| Provisional workshops | Small half day workshops in October to collect research information and review and analyse findings. | Sense-making workshop/s in December or January to review the outputs from the research and identify our area of focus for the remainder of the project. | We expect there will be multiple, small scale workshops to support developing and prototyping ideas. | A final learning exchange workshop will take place in the summer. |

What you can expect from being involved

The commitment required from you

- ✓ Having the desire to make change happen in health and care.
- ✓ Spotting and acting on opportunities for you to take forward work in your own context.
- ✓ Sharing the work of the Q Lab with your colleagues and professional networks, to make connections with other pieces of work.
- ✓ Signing up to the values that underpin the Q Lab approach, including how we encourage collaboration and the contribution of others.

Q Lab commitments to you

- ✓ We will design and deliver the Q Lab process in ways that enable your contribution.
- ✓ Your opinions and experience will be listened to and valued.
- ✓ We will keep you informed and up to date about the work as it progresses, with regular opportunities for contributions.
- ✓ If you have feedback on the process and your involvement we would love to hear from you and will reflect on how improvements can be made.

Q Lab workshops are CPD certified and will contribute to your continuing professional development time.



Additional support for patient leaders

The Q Lab is committed to working closely with patient leaders; patients and the public will have the opportunity alongside health and care professionals, to participate in Lab activities.

We recognise that there are financial barriers that can make it difficult for patient leaders to contribute time to additional pieces of work. To reduce this issue, we will pay out of pocket expenses for people working with us.

For more information please read the [Q Lab expenses policy](#).



How we collaborate with each other

Workshops and webinars

Throughout the year we will hold online and offline events that bring together Lab participants.

Invites will be sent to people in regular email updates or via the online group.

Email updates

We will share regular email updates. You can opt out of these at any time.

Online group

There is an [online group](#) for this project.

This space allows you to meet and connect with others working on the topic area. It will also be the best way to stay in touch with the Q Lab work, with regular updates and opportunities to contribute.

Q Lab team

You can get in touch with the Q Lab team: Qlab@health.org.uk

Twitter

You can follow us on Twitter using the main Q community account [@theQcommunity](#)

For this project we will be posting updates using #QLabs

We will also make a Twitter list of all Lab participants.



Become a Lab participant and sign up

If you have any questions, get in touch with us QLab@health.org.uk

If you'd rather just keep up-to-date with how this project progresses, we can add you to our mailing list. Email QLab@health.org.uk

Know someone who'd make an excellent Lab participant? Pass this on.

