**Digital Innovation is for Everyone – Supporting Digital Inclusion Across Healthcare**

***A Q Exchange 2022 Award Winning Project***

**Background**

The [Q Community](https://q.health.org.uk/) is a community of thousands of people across the UK and Ireland, collaborating to improve the safety and quality of health and care. Q is delivered by the Health Foundation and supported and co-funded by partners across the UK and Ireland.

Q Exchange is a funding programme that offers Q members the chance to apply for up to £40,000 of funding for their improvement ideas. This year the award focused on the theme **‘Bringing together the worlds and methods of improvement and digital, to enable better outcomes and faster, more sustainable change’.** Q members from across the UK and Ireland develop and refine potential improvement ideas through the online collaborative process with input from the community. A members vote takes place, and the winning ideas are awarded funding.

Q Exchange aims to activate the knowledge of improvement experts, creating links between those leading work and those who can help champion, support, adopt these ideas; and to boost ideas that have the best potential to generate value for the health and care system. As a [winning idea](https://q.health.org.uk/idea/2022/digital-innovation-is-for-everyone-supporting-digital-inclusion-across-healthcare/), our project will be offered funding alongside ongoing support and collaboration from across the Q Community.

**Project Summary**

We have been awarded £40,000. We will be combining this with some existing funding to employ a **Project Manager for 12 months** (AfC Band 7). This project manager will be employed by Homerton Healthcare and will work in the Neighbourhoods and Integration team (managed by Annabelle Burns, Head of Integration).

Homerton community and acute services are embracing digital innovations and clinicians report that digital innovations can have multiple benefits for patients. However, we know that digital exclusion is a significant issue for many Hackney residents, particularly those more likely to require our healthcare services. We cannot continue to develop and innovate new ways of working without addressing digital exclusion.

The appointment of a project manager to lead this work will enable us to define the complex digital inequality issue for our patients and identify some key change ideas that will make a practical difference. Bringing a Quality Improvement approach to this complex problem will enable us to define and test some practical change ideas. We also want to make best use of data and measurement so that no one is left behind as digital improvements are instigated and sustained.

We do not want to work in isolation and would like to work closely with others across the system who are addressing this issue. We are aware that this is a priority area for our system partners, and that there is already much good practice in place. The project manager will act as a connector between Hackney Council, Homerton Healthcare and the community and voluntary sector to ensure that we are working together, sharing information and making the most of the assets and knowledge we all bring from across City and Hackney.

As a result of this project, some of the changes or outcomes we hope to see may include:

* Staff supported with knowledge and information about digital exclusion
* General communications and engagement to raise the profile of this issue
* Regular training for all staff on this issue (including at induction)
* Digital exclusion champions across the Trust: taking responsibility to speak up for issues
* Digital literacy of patients included in clinical practice: case history / initial assessment
* Increased knowledge of, and referral to digital support programmes for patients
* Patient voice listened to directly about these issues
* Data available for clinicians and service managers re. health inequalities and digital improvements
* Possible partnership projects or grant applications with charitable organisations
* Participate in system-wide networks
* Use knowledge and information to advocate for our patients in the system

**Next Steps**

* Finalising the JD and recruiting to Project Manager post
* Engagement with key partners and residents from across the system as we shape the details of the project plan and expectations for the role
* Setting up a project steering group to shape and direct the project

We are keen to include and involve others as soon as possible, and would welcome any suggestions, comments, ideas or commitments to work in partnership and collaborate. Please do get in touch.

For more information: [annabelle.burns1@nhs.net](mailto:annabelle.burns1@nhs.net) (mobile: 07813 799512)