



Moving past backlogs: how can a focus on data help to ensure equitable access to services?

Emerging insights (Part 2)

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Led by



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Contents

1. [About the project](#)
2. [What we've heard so far: how can we continue to make progress on inequalities with a focus on data?](#)
3. [Theme 4: Acknowledge the opportunities for progress ahead of 'what is probably going to be one of our worst, worst winters'](#)
4. [Theme 5: Recognise your position and work with others to fill in any gaps in expertise](#)
5. [Theme 6: Take a collaborative and systematic improvement approach to drive change](#)
6. [About Q's insight work](#)
7. [What next?](#)

Navigation tip: click on the links above to go to the relevant page

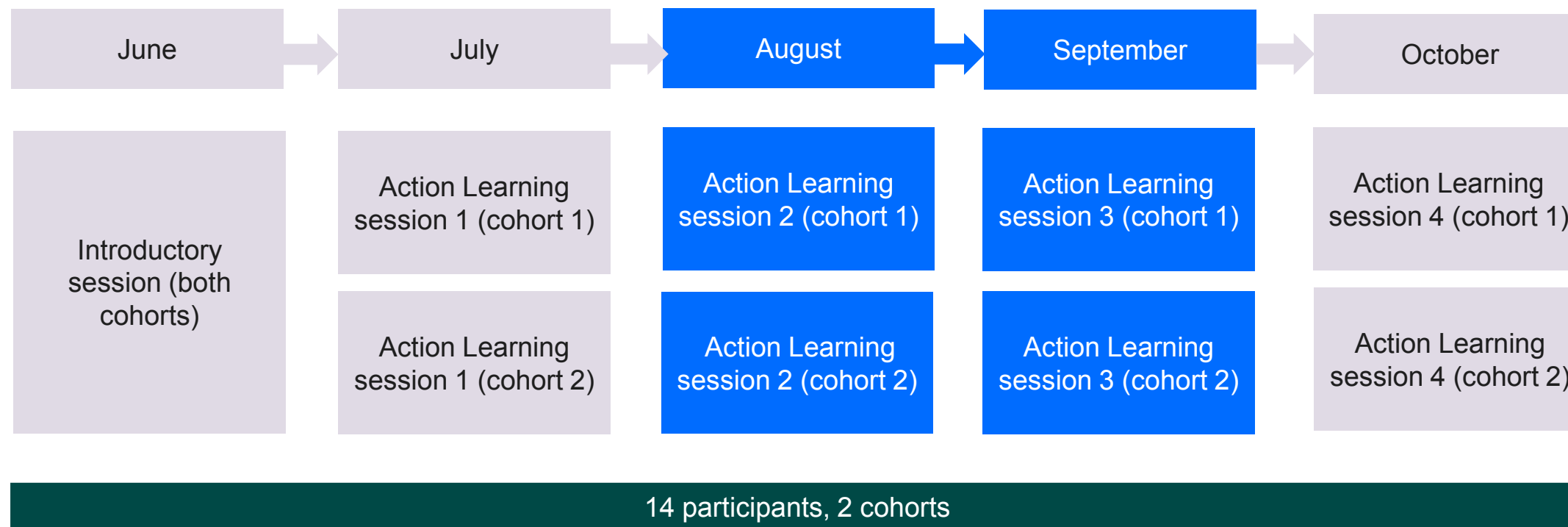
This deck is the second instalment of emerging insights and learning from Q's insight project 'Moving past backlogs: how can a focus on data help to ensure equitable access to services?' [The first was published in August 2022.](#)

The project started in June 2022 and will finish in October 2022. We'll publish a final output in early 2023.



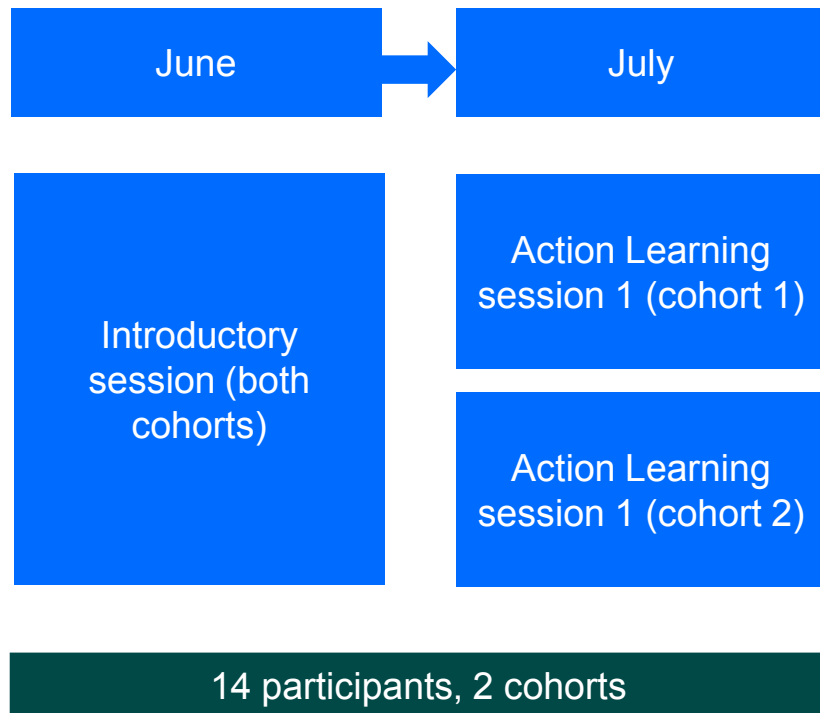
About the project

This project builds on learning from our [previous insight project](#). We are using [Action Learning](#) to provide members with an opportunity to explore live challenges and issues with a group of peers in a safe space, while also sharing their insights and learning with others. We want to create a space to help people have difficult conversations and think differently about the challenges and what's needed to address them to progress this work. We know that this space has been invaluable for participants, but it can be hard to make time for it. Read more about what we heard in the [first emerging insights installment](#), published in August 2022.



About the project: emerging insights (part 1)

In August, we published the first set of emerging insights sharing learning from the Action Learning sessions in June and July. We identified and explored three themes.

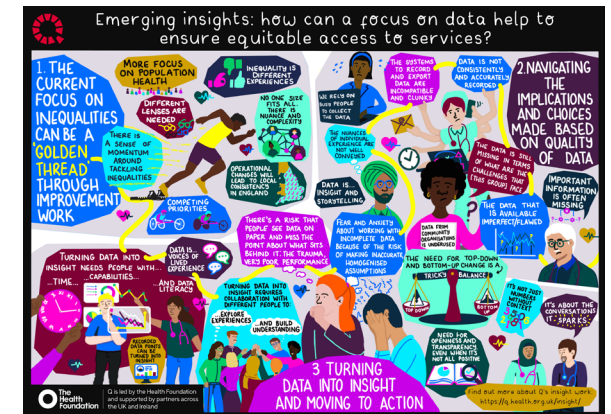


Theme 1: The current focus on inequalities can be a 'golden thread' through improvement work

Theme 2: Navigating the implications and choices made based on quality of data

Theme 3: Turning data into insight and moving to action

[Click to explore the first instalment](#)



About the project: participants

Who are our participants?

We are working with 14 Q members, in two cohorts. The participants are currently involved in live projects using data to address different inequalities and challenges around waiting times for care.

The projects they are involved in include:

- Working at national, regional or organisational level to work more collaboratively and systematically to improve data-driven decision making on shared priorities related to inequalities and reducing waiting time.
- Working with community and voluntary sector organisations to design and implement interventions to reduce inequalities in outcomes and experience of care.
- Improvement projects in specific services to reduce inequalities in access, including cancer screening, eating disorder services, maternity services, ophthalmology and diabetes services.
- A public health programme to improve health and wellbeing by addressing fuel poverty and housing quality.
- Undertaking data analysis to improve understanding of inequalities and to support service improvements.

How can we continue to make progress on inequalities with a focus on data?

What we've heard so far





Emerging insights: how can we continue to make progress on inequalities with a focus on data?

PART TWO



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Theme 4: Acknowledge the opportunities for progress ahead of ‘what is probably going to be one of our worst, worst winters’

- Our previous instalment highlighted a sense of momentum, and signs of change in the way people think and act to address inequalities. While there is momentum and opportunity, the context is incredibly challenging for sustaining progress. Heading into winter, many people working in health and care are experiencing the ‘perfect storm’ with increased service demands, a stretched workforce, budget pressures and operational, political and structural changes.
- In our small sample of Q members, we are seeing energy, commitment and desire to address inequalities and improve access to care. This energy is what is going to make progress possible, but it's going to be hard to sustain in the current context.
- People working to address inequalities will need to identify opportunities to make change and try different things to address long-standing, systemic issues, despite the pressurised context.

‘To maximise collaboration ... a team is more than the sum of their parts. Teams can quickly be formed, change in size and disappear ... uncertainty, job insecurity, add different levels (macro, micro and meso) ... affecting the motivation of the individual.’

‘It's the perfect storm with a lot of things hitting at once.’



Theme 5: Recognise your position and work with others to fill in any gaps in expertise

- For many of our participants, they are doing work that is new to them: they are trying to take a different approach and to engage different people. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge, and our participants have different levels of comfort with this.
- We've heard about feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability where there is a lack of expertise or knowledge. Participants also conveyed a sense of frustration that this uncertainty leads to a fear in other people about making decisions about what to prioritise, or which work to stop or start.
- A remedy is to find allies. While this can be a challenge, it's important to seek out others who have faced similar challenges (and potentially have some answers), and work together in new or expanded teams.
- To work well together, people doing this work need to acknowledge their own position and expand their networks to explore the experiences, expectations and assumptions of others. Learning and applying the skillsets 'of communicators, facilitators, initiators of conversation and co-design' is also important.

'That element of co-production seems to really sit front and centre whether that's... gaining and maintaining trust or whether that's the need for services to reflect and meet the needs of people accessing them.'

'Figuring out my role and speaking another language ... this is an opportunity and a challenge.'



Theme 6: Take a collaborative and systematic improvement approach to drive change

- Many of our participants are working at a local or regional system level to embed collaboration, share with purpose, and to align priorities and outcomes. But embedding a 'must-do', top-down change to be owned and shared at organisational and team level is not easy. This is especially true when working at a distance from local teams and when individuals have limited influence over how changes are implemented or realised in practice.
- Overcoming historic cultures, ways of working, behaviours, and a lack of infrastructure for sharing data are 'speed bumps' that slow progress.
- This means our participants are currently focused on:
 - Communicating about the work and creating channels for feedback. It is vital to share with people what is happening and why and then create opportunities for feedback to check – then double and triple check - assumptions about what people want and need, and what they understand or are being told.
 - Engaging people with diverse experiences and perspectives to make change together. This means creating space for people to purposefully connect with each other and to learn from the work, and to work in a more systematic way.

'You often think you're doing the right thing in the right way - but the perception and translation is a [minefield] ... people come at things from different perspectives - and you think you are doing the right thing and taking the right approach, then you get a complete curveball.'

'It's that link between data and action. I don't want to be negative but if you can't get access to the data, it's hard to know what action you should take and direction you should go in.'



About Q's insight work

Q is a community of thousands of people across the UK and Ireland, collaborating to improve the safety and quality of health and care. We share our knowledge and support each other to tackle challenges. Together, we make faster progress to change health and care for the better.

Through our insight work, we tap into the rich knowledge and diverse experiences of the Q community. We surface stories and generate and share actionable insight. This insight can be used by members and others across the health and care system to help them deliver improvement work more effectively.

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. To ensure the greatest impact in our work, we aim to involve members at all stages and, where possible, collaborate with others working on the same topic.

We use a variety of systematic methods to draw out the diverse experience and expertise of Q members relating to system priority areas. These include member surveys, workshops, case studies to amplify members' work and ongoing share and learn projects.

[Find out more about our insight work.](#)

What next?

When the project concludes in October 2022, we will consolidate the findings and stories of participants into a final output. This will be published in early 2023.

'There's a lot of fantastic work going on within the region regarding equity and access... if we could get over this little speed bump (I call it little speed bump, it's a big speed bump) but it's achievable. But if we could get over this, things will fall into place.'

Has this resonated with you? Do you have any challenges to what we've shared? [Email us](#) and share your thoughts.



Thank you

To our participants:

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