



## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SERVICE SPECIFICATION 2022/2023

### INTRODUCTION

The RCGP describes Quality Improvement (QI) as, “*A commitment to continuously improving the quality of healthcare, focusing on the needs and preferences of the people who use services. It is an evidence-based approach that helps primary care free up time to deliver and evaluate initiatives and embed new approaches more effectively and efficiently into practice*”.<sup>1</sup>

The Kings Fund states that, “*The theory and practice of Quality Improvement is based on a number of principles. They include training staff in the nature of systems, use of statistical and quantitative data over time to understand variation, inclusiveness such that all workers have an opportunity to contribute and act on ideas, and a relentless focus on the needs and experience of the people served by a system (its ‘customers’)* They also include employment of many small-scale trials and tests of change as a way to learn in action, the high value attached to teamwork and co-operation, and a belief in the importance of, “*joy at work.*”

General Practice holds significant opportunities to embrace quality improvement methodology with regards to its share of patient contact and the innate potential of its workforce. *GPs are estimated to deal with around 90% of health-related cases, and so any QI work has the potential for significant impact.*

### BACKGROUND

Quality in healthcare is a complex multidimensional concept and, for this to happen a different approach to quality needs to become embedded in the culture of General Practice, with a genuine commitment to reflective practice

and the principle of continuous improvement. Establishing such a culture requires vision, dedication, education, funding and effective clinical leadership.

To transform QI from a theoretical idea to essential practice there should be a well-considered educational programme for GPs and Primary Care team members on QI methodologies. This should be supported by sustained input and coaching for practices to help establish and cement these behaviours in their daily working lives.

Embedding QI in the culture and working life of General Practice in Northern Ireland is critical to achieving the safe, effective and financially sustainable service that patients and staff deserve. This can only be achieved through a unified and strategic approach, with action being taken throughout all levels of our healthcare system.

The Quality and Outcomes Framework was reinstated in April 2022 with Quality Improvement in General Practice as a new indicator. In order to ensure full engagement with QI activity it is necessary to provide practice teams with appropriate support and mentoring. This will help ensure that QI culture is embedded within every day practice.

## **AIMS**

To support practice teams in Quality Improvement in General Practice through a Quality Improvement (QI) Facilitator (employed via the Federation Support Unit) to result in efficient, effective, safe, patient-centred, timely and equitable patient care for patients, as well as increasing joy in work and boosting team morale.

QI mentoring will be aligned with training agreed by the Primary Care QI Steering Group to ensure standardisation of QI methodology and tools across all practices in Northern Ireland. Learning will be shared across the region to help improve the support provided to practices to help create a culture of QI.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the service are for QI Facilitators to:

- Engage (via email) with all Practices within their Federation Support Unit to actively encourage signup and engagement in QI activity.
- Support practice teams in Quality Improvement activity resulting in

efficient, effective, safe, patient-centred, timely and equitable patient care and, to increase joy in work and boosting team morale.

- Act as a point of contact for Practice QI leads to answer any QI related queries.
- To actively engage with Practice QI leads in order to embed QI within GP practices.
- Provide QI support to Practice Manager groups within FSU area.
- Provide QI support for federation PBL days.
- Provide QI mentoring, aligned with the training agreed by the Primary Care QI steering group.
- Ensure standardisation of QI methodology and tools across all practices in Northern Ireland.
- Submit the monthly QI template to the DoPC representative on the QI Working group on or before the last Friday of each month (and before bimonthly meeting).
- Attend bimonthly meetings with the SPPG QI Working Group to provide feedback from each FSU area. This will ensure shared learning across the region and will help improve the support provided to practices moving forward.

## **SERVICE OUTLINE**

Quality Improvement in General Practice is a new indicator in the 2022/23 Quality Outcomes Framework. In order to ensure full engagement with QI activity it is necessary to provide practice teams with appropriate support and mentoring. This will help ensure that QI culture is embedded within every day practice

Quality Improvement in General Practice across Northern Ireland will be supported by the FSU QI Facilitators on behalf of the SPPG, Primary Care QI Steering Group. QI Facilitators delivering this service will be employed by the FSU and accountable to the Chair of each FSU.

This service will support the standardisation of QI methodology and tools across all practices in Northern Ireland. QI learning will be shared across the region to help improve the support provided to practices to help create a culture of QI. QI facilitators will work closely with SPPG on the QI methodology and provide regular feedback to achieved the aims and objectives of QI.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

All GP practices are eligible to avail of this service.

The Federation Support Unit is the only model available to provide this service therefore practices who wish to avail of this service must collaborate via their FSU.

All Federation Support Units are eligible to deliver this service.

### **ACCEPTANCE AS A PROVIDER**

Those doctors who have previously provided services similar to this service and who satisfy at appraisal and revalidation that they have such continuing medical experience, training and competence as is necessary to enable them to contract for the enhanced service shall be deemed professionally qualified to do so.

### **PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND INDEMNITY**

The employing Federation Support Unit will ensure that any GP employed by them is currently on the NI Primary Medical Performers List, and that appropriate indemnity arrangements are in place for performers

### **VERIFICATION**

Any aspect of this service may be subject to verification checks by the SPPG. All documentation in relation to this initiative must be retained by the Federation Support Unit in the event that they may be required for post payment verification.

### **FUNDING**

Funding will be payable to the Federation Support Unit subject to Contract Variation sign off.

Funding will be available to Federation Support Units to cover 130 QI sessions (December 2022 – March 2023). Funding associated with the administration and management costs will also be payable at a rate of 5% to the Federation Support Unit (as per the Business Case).

## **PAYMENT PROCESS**

This service will fund the employment of QI Facilitators to deliver QI sessions to all Northern Ireland GP practices via the Federation Support Unit.

Practices should authorise the transfer of this funding to the Federation Support Unit to enable the provision of this service on their behalf. This should be specified when completing the Contract Variation for this service. BSO will process payments to GP Practices in their monthly payment run, action the authorised deduction from the Practices' payment and make relevant payment to each Federation Support Unit, on a monthly basis, following receipt and acceptance of completed contract variations from Federation Support Unit.

SPPG reserves the right to recoup any funding not utilised in line with this service.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

QI Facilitators will complete and return the monthly QI template to the DoPC representative to include:

- Total Number of sessions delivered each month
- Number of Practices actively engaging with QI Facilitator each month
- Number of Practice QI queries answered (via email, phone, face to face) inline with the themes below:
  - Culture and context
  - Identify Quality issue
  - Understanding the problem
  - Strategy and change ideas
  - Testing
  - Implement, embed, sustain and share
- Number of monthly meetings with Practices, Practice Manager Groups, Federations PBLs, other.

## **ANNUAL REVIEW AND AUDIT**

The Federation Support Unit should ensure that data for which the invoices are submitted should be recorded and held at Practice/Federation Support Unit level for six years, and if requested by the SPPG, should be provided in the required format.