



EQUIP  
ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE  
Tower Hamlets

15/02/2018

I'm back, guest editing this week's EQUIP update whilst Virginia gallivants in the USA on a 'study tour' (read: jolly). Luckily for you, I specialise in brevity and will be making this the first of our cut-down newsletters.

This week's topic: **breaking the rules**. You might not expect your commissioner to be the one encouraging you to break the rules (and please don't take this as an excuse to not submit your next e-dec), but if you're allowed to break the rules, then so am I (just don't tell NHS England...).

Have you ever thought about how many rules we currently have in place that were likely created with the best of intentions but don't benefit patients, families, or staff? This is a question our friends at the Institute for Health Improvement (IHI) decided to ask, creating a global movement and an annual 'breaking the rules week', where staff from partner organisations are asked to review their organisations rules to see what still makes sense. You can find out a bit more about the movement [here](#).

So what does that mean for us? Well, how often do we do things because 'it's the way it's always been done' or because 'that's what we were told to do'? How many rules do we have, that aren't even rules at all, but myths that have been passed down over time to become part of what we do day to day? I can certainly name a few within the CCG!

This came up a lot in the new patient registration project that the GP Care Group and CCG are collaborating on. After speaking to just a handful of practice staff, we were aware that there were all kinds of interpretations of the regulations and rules on new patient registrations, from what ID a patient must have to register (spoiler alert: none), to the forms that must be completed, and whether all patients needed a new patient check etc. etc.... We also realised that the lack of clarity caused some of our patient assistants all kinds of worry (will I get into trouble for registering, or not registering this person?). So, before we event started looking at new ways of registering people we set out to clarify the genuine rules that practices MUST follow, as well as some good practice and guidance that might make sense.

How do you join in then? Well, we've missed the official breaking the rules week – but how about in your teams you start to ask yourselves these questions? Think about the 'rules' in your practice and categorize them:

- Is this a rule that needs clarity? (rules that might be a myth, or a habit, or rules created for reasons that are longer clear)
- Is this a rule that needs redesign? (an administrative rule that leaders have the power to change)
- Is this a rule that needs advocacy? (rules that are in place due to regulations or policies beyond your organisation control)

If you need more information, then IHI have created a [handy guide](#) to help work through these.

Please tell us how you get on and what rules you decide to 'break' in your practice!