



ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

Tower Hamlets Our Latest Newsletter (11/03/2019)



So you've picked your project; now what?

Many of our emails have been focused on how to pick a good project for change – on how you identify a project that feels important, unique, simple, and won't take your whole life to resolve (see the Project Selection Worksheet we shared on 24th January). However, we know by now that many of you have already chosen not *one*, but *ten* projects to work on. Beautiful little queues and backlogs are building up, of all the stuff you want to tackle. Improvement bottlenecks, the only kind of bottleneck we love.

So you've got it. Your snazzy project, the thing you want to sink your teeth into. The following has happened to get you there:

- ü You had a coach willing to help with the project
- ü Your sponsor signed it off with an indelible pen (and maybe you are the sponsor?!)
- ü You picked your team members – a **tight** team of five to seven people (smaller practices may have smaller teams), who offer a variety of roles and skills

Next, of course, comes **the drafting of your project**. The detailed thinking that goes into the front page of your project on [Life QI](#), your project detail charter. But why, I hear you ask, why bother writing the project detail sheet, why not just get on with it? If the magic will happen anyway, what's the point of taking time to write it down? You are, after all, master artisans of healthcare improvement.

Totally, totally do write down all your project detail on Life QI. Because writing your charter will:

- Keep you focused and really help you understand the problem you're tackling
- Define exactly who is in your team
- Establish boundaries and avoid spill over into other areas of work
- Remind you of the role of patients and service users
- Confirm when you start, when you end, when you meet, and when you review key milestones
- Articulate what success looks like
- Allow other practices to understand and learn from your journey

And here's one key thing to do when you draft your project.... **Pick your team leader!** Who *is* your team leader?

- This is not your sponsor. Your sponsor is probably not going to be coming to your improvement meetings; he/she provides air cover and protection to your project.
- This is not your coach. Your coach is a technical expert, who uses scientific tools to teach others.
- Your leader ***is*** the person who will be responsible for the place where the changes are going to happen – if, for example, you were changing the way you managed your walk-in blood clinic, your leader would be the phlebotomist who wants to take charge of this. And – this is key – it's a people person. Someone good at working with individuals and teams.

With hundreds of projects, and hundreds of people trained, we are very excited to see Life QI reflect your work and progress. This is just a reminder to take the time, and start filling out your project detail page as you mean to continue: with care, with discipline, with thought. In the same way as you wouldn't shove freshly pressed clothes into a dirty laundry bag, your time and work deserve a packaging, a front page worthy of your effort and talent. Your projects stand out when the detail looks and sounds good – and others will benefit from your attention and care. So, in fact, will you – when a few weeks down the road you forget what you defined as a “missed call”, or you find yourself changing something that has no impact on your main aim. Your charter will keep you on track. It will remind you. *Write it down.* Write it all down. The rest of us can't learn it, if we can't read it.

“You can make anything by writing.” –C.S. Lewis

Virginia and the EQUIP team