



Culture of Care

Programme information pack



The Culture of Care programme



This programme aims to improve the culture of inpatient mental health, learning disability and autism wards for patients and staff so that they are safe, therapeutic and equitable places to be cared for, and fulfilling places to work.

We know from our work over the last 6 years, and that of others, that culture changes when patients and staff work together to do things differently.

Our Quality Improvement (QI) approach provides a systematic way for them to do this, and our experience is that using this approach to test and implement lots of small changes leads to a big impact.

The conditions to give this work the best chance of sustainable success are that:

- The work is fully co-produced
- The improvement effort is supported throughout the organisation
- Changes attend to the inequity people often experience in inpatient mental health care
- People doing the work are able to look outside their organisation to share the learning and journey with others across the country.

Our offer seeks to enable all of this to happen, and our approach is about improvement – the programme plays no part in performance management at any level of the system.

We hope that you join us.

Wards



Wards will receive close support from our skilled QI coaches.

We will begin with a change theory that has been co-produced nationally, and then the QI coach will help each ward to adapt it to their specific circumstances, so that they develop a set of change ideas informed by the evidence base, national expertise and local context.

We will then coach each ward to use a QI approach to test their change ideas. We expect that to achieve an aim as complex as this, each ward will need to test over 20 changes over the course of the two years on the programme.

However, each change might be quite small – for information on the sorts of changes that people have made on our other QI collaboratives see [here](#).

Each organisation can put forward between 2 and 4 wards for the programme for direct QI support (we have capacity to support a total of 200 wards across the country).

When selecting wards, we have learned that the following are helpful considerations:

- Enthusiasm for the work is the overriding key ingredient to success.
- The project lead is a key role on each ward. This might be the ward manager, but could also be other roles, such as Deputy Ward Manager, Senior Practitioner, Senior Peer Support work, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist or Consultant Psychiatrist
- If you have exemplar wards, they are unlikely to get the most out of the programme.

Learning Networks and Community



To deliver the programme, we will develop 10 learning networks, each with 5-6 organisations in them. The learning networks will be based on existing relationships as far as possible, and we would like you to tell us about any organisations you would like to be in a learning network with.

We will:

- Have one team providing support (a Lived Experience Consultant, a Senior Leader, a Senior Improvement Advisor and QI coaches) for each learning network, meaning that we will be able to maximise opportunities to share learning and resources within the network.
- Have regular learning sessions for wards across each network
- Run some activities, such as action learning sets, across each network to maximise cross organisational learning for leaders.
- While much of the programme will be on a learning network basis, all participating organisations and wards will be part of one national learning community. There will be national events (virtual and in-person) and many opportunities for sharing learning across the country.

Leadership



We know that to sustain improvement on wards, leadership throughout an organisation is critical. We will provide support to Executives leads and sponsors to lead this work through our team of Lived Experience consultants and experienced leaders, who you can read more about [here](#).

We ask that you nominate one or two Executives who will lead this work at board level, and a senior sponsor who will lead the work within the organization.

The role of the sponsor is to:

- Support formation of a stable team at the start of the project
- Review monthly progress and ensure that the Board and wider organisation know about the improvement efforts on the wards
- Regularly liaise with project leads
- Help unblock barriers faced by project teams

The role of sponsor is usually best held by someone with operational responsibility for the participating wards (such as a Clinical Director), or with corporate responsibility for quality (such as Head of Nursing). This will vary in each organisation and may be the same or different people for each of the wards that you are putting forward.

Other QI work



Many organisations will be undertaking other QI work on their wards currently and over the next two years. As part of our support, we will work with organisations to incorporate and share the learning from all improvement work on their wards.

This includes [Mental Health Act QI programme](#) also commissioned by NHS England and being led by the Public Service Consultants (PSC) being rolled out in spring 2024 to 35 NHS provider organisations. We are working closely with the PSC to ensure the programmes are complimentary and give a cohesive and supportive offer for provider organisations.

Other considerations



Once all organisations have signed up, we will work with them to agree how we will provide support to:

- Move away from risk assessment tools and stratification to a holistic approach to safety on wards.
- Meaningfully work to increase equity on their wards.
- Align their corporate functions to support improving culture on inpatient wards.

Registration



Registration to take part in the Culture of Care Programme is now open using our [online form](#) and will close on Friday 15th March 2024.

We hope this information pack helps you prepare responses for the registration form, on which we ask for key contact details, the wards you would like to register, details of senior executive(s) for the leadership element and an outline of co-production in your organisation. We ask that each organisation registers only once.

If you have any questions or would like to speak with a member of our team, please do not hesitate to contact us on cultureofcare@rcpsych.ac.uk.



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