

## CNWL QI: Spreading improvement

### Introduction

If your local QI team is demonstrating improvement within your service you may wish to consider celebrating and sharing your success. Alongside this, the next logical step for a successful project is to spread it to other areas across the organisation. However, it is not a case of simply taking a process from one location, implementing in another and expecting it to work perfectly. Successful spread, like a successful QI project, relies heavily on understanding of some basic principles and uses a defined methodology which includes key elements such as having a clear communication plan and executive support.

Prior to embarking on spread it is vital to be curious as to why your QI project was successful and to consider the context and setting of the successful improvement and how it differs from the places you hope to spread it to. Context and setting is crucial even for the small scale projects to similar settings to the original e.g. ward to ward or community team to community team.

### What is spread?

Spread is 'when best practice is disseminated consistently and reliably across a whole system and involves the implementation of proven interventions in each applicable care setting'. There is a large body of knowledge on the theory and methods to spread changes and overcome challenging situations. If you want to know more about spreading improvement then doing the IHI open school course *QI: 201 Planning for spread: From local improvements to system wide change* is a very good place to start.

### When to consider spread

If you have a QI project that has delivered its' aim in your local service (a project scoring more than 4 on life QI) and the project had specific change ideas that led to the significant improvement which could be used in another setting then please discuss with one of the CNWL QI team. Alternatively, one of the QI team may contact the project lead to discuss the potential for sharing across divisions and seeing if there are opportunities for other services to improve.

When deciding if your project is suitable for spread consider the following questions:

1. Has my project shown sustained improvement?
2. Do I have evidence that an implemented change idea led to the improvement?
3. Does my project align with strategic aims of the trust?
4. Is my team able to articulate the new ideas so that other services will easily understand?

### Why is spread difficult and what guidance is available to help

It cannot be underestimated how difficult spreading even the simplest idea is. Context and setting are vital. Furthermore whilst you may have a good evidence and belief of how your change idea led to improvement in your service, it does not mean that the same change idea will be as effective in another setting. The concept of “core and periphery” in improvement can help explain this complexity: the ‘hard core’ are the “elements that are well-defined and fixed” and the ‘soft periphery’ as “components that are less clear and flexible to adaptation by the adopting system”.

The adopting team must see and want the benefits of any change. Your team may have been enthusiastic about trying to improve a specific issue within your service but this may not be seen as a priority or a need for another service. There may be other higher priorities or it may be perceived by staff as something that will not work within their service. Understanding other services readiness for change is important (see Box 1). The IHI have developed a new idea scorecard for teams to assess the ease (or difficulty) of spreading a new idea (see Appendix 1). This tool incorporates Everett Rogers’ attributes of a change (see Appendix 2) to score a new idea based on:

- **Relative Advantage:** The degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes
- **Simplicity:** The degree to which an innovation is perceived as simple to understand and use
- **Compatibility:** The degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, experiences, beliefs, and needs of potential adopters
- **Trialability:** The degree to which an innovation can be tested on a small scale
- **Observability:** The degree to which the use of an innovation and the results it produces are visible to those who should consider it

### What are the key steps to for spreading improvement once an improvement idea is identified

The following is based on the IHI framework for spread which identifies the key components for planning and guiding the spread of new ideas.

[http://www.ihf.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/Courses/Documents/QI201\\_L2\\_OverviewofSpreadComponents.pdf](http://www.ihf.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/Courses/Documents/QI201_L2_OverviewofSpreadComponents.pdf)

1. Obtain senior/executive support
2. Identify if project fits to a strategic objective
3. Set up a spread team (should include an executive sponsor, senior leader, project manager, representatives from successful sites where changes implemented. May include access to key opinion leaders, patients, and access to QI, HR and IT expertise)

4. Develop a spread plan (should include an aim, a target population, a timeframe, a target level of performance to be achieved)
5. Develop a communication plan (need to initially communicate why change is needed followed by the change plan. Regular meetings will be required to share knowledge. In between meetings, the spread teams should use other forms of communication, including regular one-to-one check-in calls and electronic communication in the form of newsletters, emails, and website that enables share of tools and information to support the change)
6. Develop a measurement plan (use life QI to collect and share data across sites and measure the rate of spread across sites)

Box 1: Psychologist Kurt Lewin proposed that organisational change happens in 3 phases:

- **Unfreezing:** Loosening the attachment to the current attitude or practice. In practical terms other teams may need help to understand why a change suggested by a team outside their service is necessary and what it might involve.
- **Change:** During change, people will need lots of support as questions and concerns arise.
- **Freezing (or re-freezing):** To support a sustainable change, ongoing feedback and monitoring is required to reinforce the benefits of the change. New protocols and procedures will need to be established so that the change becomes business as usual.

## Appendix 1:

### New Idea Scorecard

	Relative Advantage	Simplicity	Compatibility	Trialability	Observability
(Name of the Innovation)					

### Definitions

**Relative Advantage** – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes

**Simplicity** – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as simple to understand and use

**Compatibility** – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, experiences, beliefs, and needs of potential adopters

**Trialability** – the degree to which an innovation can be tested on a small scale

**Observability** – the degree to which the use of an innovation and the results it produces are visible to those who should consider it

### How to Use the Scorecard

- The exercise is done as a table exercise with people sitting at tables.
- Write the name of a specific change/innovation in the box at the left.
- Have each person independently rate the change from the “spread target” point of view. Use a 1–5 scale:
  - 1 – change is very weak relative to this attribute
  - 3 – change is okay relative to this attribute
  - 5 – change is very strong relative to this attribute
- After each table has had a chance to evaluate the change, have a report out and group discussion of how the changes were rated in relation to each of the attributes. Pay particular attention to: (1) any item where there are significant differences in scoring among the group (e.g., 2s and 5s on the same item); and (2) scores of 1 or 2 for any of the items.
- Use these discussions to plan how to overcome barriers that are identified and develop an action plan for addressing these barriers.
- Teaching point is that each change differs on how easily it is likely to spread. Some may require specific communication messages or specific actions that a team can take to make it more likely to spread (e.g., make sure the test is visible and testable by others, simplify the instructions on how to do the change).

4<sup>th</sup> October 2018