



Step 4 Sustain and Embed Networks



A network is an interconnected group of people. One of the aims of QI Ready at the RCGP is establishing a network of members of the primary care team interested in quality improvement

Building networks of people with a common purpose and enthusiasm for positive change is a way of harnessing the power of 'emergent change'. *Emergent change is based on the assumption that change is a continuous, open-ended and unpredictable process of aligning and realigning an organisation to its changing environment* (Burnes, 2009). Networks can help to smooth the process of improvement, especially in systems that involve multiple organisations, for example across a geographical area involving both health and social care.

Networks can give you access to information; they can allow you to share representative duties; raise your profile; and can offer you good support.

How to

There are many networks already in existence. If you are interested in improvement you may find it worthwhile to look into what is out there and join in. Many networks operate through social media such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The NHS maintains a [website](#) to help people to find a network aligned to their interests. This website also helps you to set up your own 'virtual' network, though networks are more powerful if the members also meet face-to-face, and have chance to get to know each other.

[The Health Foundation](#) has shared a "5C wheel" model and this model enables a network to add value especially in quality improvement. The Cs are:

- Common purpose. The purpose needs to be clear and stated at the start.
- Co-operative structure. The style of leadership is important. It is often facilitative and can come from a respected figure. Members should be encouraged to get involved in the network's development.
- Critical mass. Membership can be encouraged by offering members something they would value. An engagement strategy needs to be in place and resourcing needs must be considered.
- Collective intelligence. There needs to be an easy way to share experiences and results within a safe environment. Feedback on any impact needs to be given.
- Community building. Personal contact should be encouraged and smaller sub-groups may need to be established.

A [short film](#) from the Health Foundation explains the 5C model further.