Response to NHS Chief Executive’s Open Call for Evidence and Ideas

Respondent ID: 259

Organisation name: The Queen's Nursing Institute

Type of response: Online
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259

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**Organisation name:**

The Queen's Nursing Institute

**Please choose the description below that best fits your organisation’s main role:**

Voluntary/charitable sector

**What can the NHS and NHS Commissioning Board learn from national and international best practice to accelerate the pace and scale of adoption of innovations throughout the NHS?**

The QNI has run innovation funding programmes for more than 20 years, and our experience shows that:

- ‘innovative’ ideas are frequently mirrors of ‘ordinary’ practice elsewhere; NHS staff sometimes have a narrow view of the world and are unaware of changes happening elsewhere.
- Nurses and AHPs in the NHS lack confidence in their ability to deliver change; they feel powerless, and they do genuinely require permission from managers to undertake any change project. Those outside the NHS often have more freedom and more confidence.
- People who take on improvement projects are frequently challenged, obstructed or ostracised by their peers, and sometimes their managers, for doing something different; this makes sustaining change or innovation additionally difficult.
- Taking forward an innovation or change project requires skills that are not routinely taught to health professionals: project management, communications, business planning, negotiation, financial planning.

**What specific actions do you think national NHS bodies, such as the NHS National Commissioning Board, need to take to encourage and stimulate the successful and rapid adoption and spread of innovations throughout the NHS?**
As now, encourage and reward innovation and “different” thinking continually as a normal part of NHS life
Support national organisations or teams dedicated to spreading expertise in innovation and supporting innovators (cf. the former Modernisation Agency, the NHS Institute)
Encourage professional regulators to make business, change and innovation skills part of national standards for professional education and post-registration training
Encourage all NHS organisations to set up formal links with, and arrange temporary exchanges of staff with, non-NHS organisations, to broaden individuals’ outlook and develop “hybrid vigour”.

All need to help to achieve a culture change in the NHS, from risk-averse and rigid, to enquiring, inspired and flexible

Do you have any further comments about accelerating the adoption and spread of innovation in healthcare?

The main barriers to accelerated adoption of change are culture, skills and breadth of vision, probably in that order. The fact that, in spite of this, there is a huge amount of innovation in the NHS suggests how much could be achieved if these barriers were lowered or removed. The QNI’s Fund for Innovation programme, now in its 21st year, will continue to find and fund innovative ideas that have the potential to make big changes for patients.

The QNI would be happy to contribute to any further discussions about this subject.

We would like to be able to follow up interesting comments and case studies. Can we contact you for this purpose?

Yes

Do you want to be kept in touch with the next steps in this process?

Yes

Do you want to be included in a wider community of interest?

Yes

What specific actions do you think local NHS bodies, such as providers and Clinical Commissioning Groups, need to take to encourage and stimulate the successful and rapid adoption and spread of innovations throughout the NHS?
• Proactively seek out staff who want to do things differently, and provide opportunities; set up a culture of excitement about change in the organisation
• Set up protective mechanisms (e.g. mentors, board-level champions) to support staff who lead change
• Set up a route for staff with ideas and enthusiasm to bypass their immediate manager if they are being blocked
• Authorize managers to ‘lose the rules’ sometimes to enable change
• Institute reward programmes, not necessarily monetary, but offering opportunities and recognition
• Incorporate successful changes rapidly into the mainstream, to avoid them remaining one enthusiast’s pet project and vulnerable should that person leave