

Life QI – quality improvement software for healthcare professionals

Overview

Life QI is an online platform that was originally developed as part of the South West Patient Safety Collaborative, in partnership with the South West AHSN and SeeData Ltd, to assist frontline health and social care staff in running quality improvement (QI) projects. Based around the improvement methodology promoted by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), it supports teams to plan, monitor and report the progress of their improvement projects, as well as connect with other member of the QI community, facilitating collaboration and shared learning.

Following the success in the South West region, the platform has since been further developed and enhanced, in partnership with the AHSN Network and spread across the country's 15 AHSNs and internationally across 28 countries. Currently in England, there are 1,400 organisations registered on the system, 10,100 people using it and over 5,700 quality improvement projects taking place.

“The LIFE system has been designed, developed and built by a partnership of frontline clinicians, managers and data analysts who are passionate about improving quality and safety across health and social care. LIFE was created to help healthcare professionals to run their quality improvement projects, share their work, and learn from the work of other teams. Improvement teams using LIFE have welcomed the tool and the support it gives them to carry out their QI projects.” – Rob Bethune, Consultant and Clinical Advisor to South West AHSN

Challenge / problem identified

An increasing number of healthcare professionals and organisations across England were demonstrating an interest in QI and developing their capability in this area. While a range of improvement projects were being undertaken, many people were working in isolation and running QI projects in different ways, making shared learning and collaboration extremely difficult. It was also difficult for organisations running QI at scale to track, manage and report on a large portfolio of projects as they did not have a dedicated QI project management system.

So there was an increasing demand for an online platform, specifically tailored to running QI projects, which could equip teams with the tools they need to progress with their QI projects, allow organisations to run QI at scale, and also enable collaboration across organisations.

Actions taken

The South West AHSN and SeeData Ltd jointly funded the initial development of Life QI. Since 2015, all 15 AHSNs have successfully supported the spread and adoption of the platform to over 1,400 organisations across England.

In partnership with SeeData Ltd, the AHSN Network established a monthly national user group and quarterly steering group.

The AHSN Network has played a fundamental role in contributing to the development, adoption and spread of the platform. For instance, user groups worked very closely with SeeData to develop the updated platform, which was released to the UK in October 2017. The new platform, equipped with new and enhanced functionality, was designed in conjunction with partner organisations across the AHSN Network, ensuring the platform catered to the needs of its users.

“I use the Life QI system for running projects and find that it is absolutely fantastic. One of the great things that you can do with Life QI is run projects geographically, as it means that you can work with other people on projects virtually without having to see them face to face. The second massive benefit of using Life QI is that it people understand the individual components of improvement projects. If team members are having to sort out own data, Driver Diagrams or PDSA cycles, for example, can appear quite complex. With Life QI, everything is laid out so brilliantly you can take people through these, which is fantastic.” – Dr Julian Abel from Cornwall Hospice Care

Impacts / outcomes

Atlas is our directory of ‘candidates for’ and ‘examples of’ spread, so we need good clear evidence of impact to make the case that this solution is achieving what it intended to and is therefore ready to be considered for spread elsewhere.

In use by over 1,000 NHS organisations, Life QI is now being used to run more than 5,000 improvement projects. Around 10% of these projects have already demonstrated tangible improvements.

Projects range from small scale local improvements to regional and even national improvements such as the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Collaborative. The nature and impact of the projects run on Life QI is hugely wide ranging – positive impacts have been seen in areas such as reducing medication errors, reducing violence on psychiatric wards, reducing waiting times, improving joy at work and a host of other areas. It is also being used to demonstrate and facilitate the spread of improvements such as NEWS and the ED checklist.

A key benefit of the platform is that it can track whether training and support is resulting in genuine improvement activity without having to ask busy teams for reports and information. Latterly we have built in functionality that allows QI projects to be explored in other settings around the UK and to build communities of shared interest.

“As a team supporting improvement work in an acute NHS trust, including several geographical sites, we have found the Life QI platform to be invaluable for sharing and developing QI projects. QI is new to many of our staff and Life QI has given them the ability to record all aspects of their projects in one place and communicate both with one another and the central Improvement Team. The links to the learning site have been an added resource and helped to facilitate learning about QI methodologies across wider teams.” – QI Team from University College London Hospital

Plans for the future

AHSNs will continue to work closely with SeeData to contribute to the development, adoption and spread of the platform. In England there is significant opportunity for Life QI to continue to be used to facilitate regional and national programmes/collaboratives, which is an area of focus for the AHSNs and SeeData. SeeData has also introduced the platform to 27 other countries and continues to experience adoption in a wide range of international healthcare systems.

Next steps and spread

The system will be provided free to all health and care teams in the South West. We will encourage people undertaking training with us to use the system to continue to develop their skills and we will ensure that we use the system to register and share all QI projects that the SW AHSN is involved in.

We are also in discussion with the wider AHSN network and NHS Improvement about making the system more open for usage UK-wide. This would deliver massive benefits as members would be able to learn from and connect with even more quality improvement teams.

Start and end dates

April 2015 to present

Find out more

For more information, please visit www.lifeqisystem.com or www.swahsn.com

Contact for help and advice

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