

Become the KING in NetworKING

The development of quality improvement networks

Introduction

This work aimed to answer two separate questions:

A scientific question: How can networks contribute to the spread of quality improvement 'best practices' and serve as a learning collaborative for their members?

A practical question: How can the network theory support the development of networks aiming to improve the quality and safety of care?

Networks definition

Networks are cooperative structures where an interconnected group of individuals, unite around a shared purpose.

NHS IQ's task to build and rapidly accelerate the spread of improvement and change capability across a complex health and care system is significant and ambitious. Our Networks programme aims to achieve this by providing an expert resource in the field of network development, leadership and support. In partnership with the Centre for Innovation in Health Management, University of Leeds, NHS IQ have developed a Network Toolkit.

This poster focuses on the use of our **Network Toolkit**; an online learning resource, providing the building blocks and 'know how' for networks to strengthen and sustain their own development, performance and impact. The Toolkit offers:

Networks: Current intelligence about networks – key features and functions of effective networks and how to start your own.

Communications: Create a profile and place yourself on the interactive map so other networks can find you.

Resources: Open access to discussion forums, literature, case studies, snappy updates, policy papers and apps.

Diagnostics: Develop successful and sustainable networks through surveys and discussions, action plans and ongoing feedback.

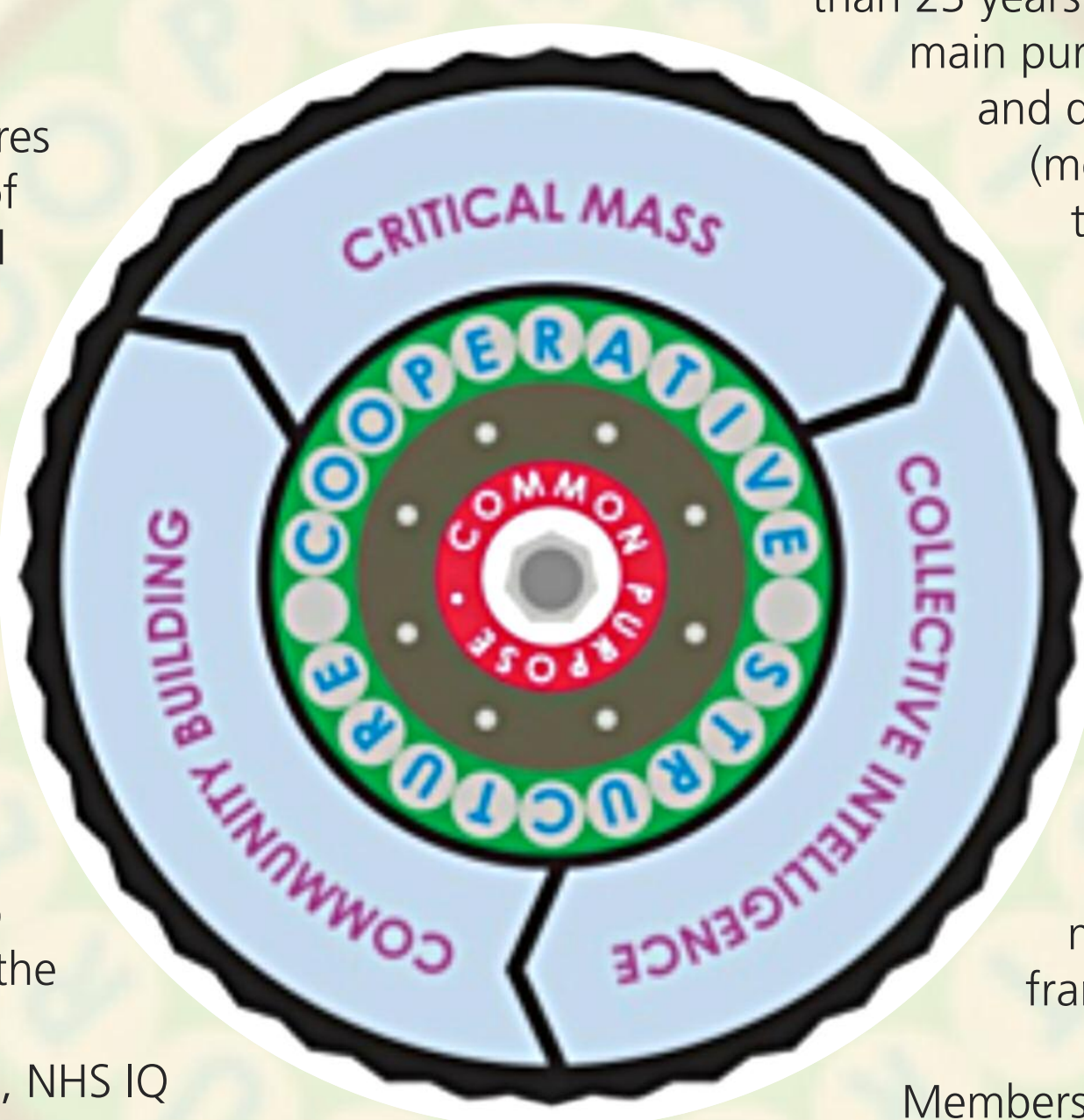
Assessing a quality managers' network in Dutch hospitals

In September 2014 a network of 20 quality managers working in Dutch hospitals was visited. The aim of the visit was to understand more about the effectiveness of quality improvement networks both between hospitals and networks within hospitals. The Dutch network of quality managers has existed for more than 23 years and meets five times a year with the main purpose of sharing learning around safety and quality. The network is self-funded (members pay an annual fee of 400 euros to cover the cost of the network's meetings and educational activities) and is by invitation only.

Methods

A design-based research approach [1] was employed to contribute to both research and practice, starting with a survey (55% response rate) on the current important features of the network. Next, members of the network (response 86%) completed a matrix based on the 5C wheel framework [2].

Members rated the 'maturity' of the network based on the current situation and indicated which state on the 'maturity' ladder they wanted to achieve. The results of the survey and matrix were explored and interpretations further developed in two meetings with the network members (one of which also was attended by members of NHS IQ). During these meetings the network members explained the scores and discussed the theoretical improvements based on the matrix that could serve the network (i.e. purpose and direction, governance and structure, leadership and facilitation, knowledge capture and reuse, integrity and validity, learning and improvement, impact and value, sustainability and renewal).



Results and discussion

The network maturity model was used as a tool to start a discussion about the key features of the Dutch network. In some areas the network decided to develop in another direction. For instance, the network was focused on the objectives of its members and decided to move forwards to more involvement in the Dutch healthcare system. The network consists of members who have been quality managers in hospitals since this new 'job' was established in the Netherlands. The network maturity model made clear that the know-how of all the members in total is huge, and can therefore be used to influence the politics and dynamics in the country.

The 5C wheel framework was used to think about quality improvement networks within the Dutch hospitals. In every hospital, experiments started to connect professionals working on different themes (such as internal audits, prospective risk analysis, adverse events studies and safety topic improvements) with the centrally organised quality department.

