

Improving together: Facilitators

A quality improvement education programme

2025

About the Improving together: Facilitators Programme

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) aims to support health and disability organisations to develop quality improvement capability through the *Ako tahi hei whakapai ake i te kounga* | *Improving together* education programme. As part of this, the Improving together: Facilitators Programme builds practical quality improvement skills and knowledge to enable participants to lead quality improvement activities in their area of work.

This programme has been developed specifically for the Aotearoa New Zealand health and disability sector and will be delivered by Health NZ from late February to early September 2025.

Programme aim

This programme is designed for the Aotearoa New Zealand health and disability context. It incorporates te ao Māori principles and approaches to addressing equity, supporting the weaving of these through improvement activities across the sector.

The Facilitators programme aims to develop and expand the quality improvement skills and knowledge required to become an effective facilitator of change and improvement within a team or work area.

Programme focus – Government Policy Statement

The Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027 (GPS) sets out the objectives and expectations for the health system over the next three years. The objectives and expectations build on the Health Targets and Mental Health Targets and focus on what is needed across the health system – improved access to health services, more timely access to health services, and high-quality health services.

Five priorities have been developed around key drivers of improvement in health outcomes and experiences for all New Zealanders. These priority areas are distinct but are interconnected and reinforcing.

Over the next three years, the health system will focus on improvements in three priority areas relating to health services:

- **Access:** Ensuring that every person regardless of where they live in New Zealand, has equitable access to the health care services they need.
- **Timeliness:** Ensuring that people can access the health care and services they need when they need it in a prompt and efficient way.

- **Quality:** Ensuring that health care and services delivered in New Zealand are safe, easy to navigate, understandable and welcoming to users, and are continuously improving.

The two other priority areas are critical enablers for improving health services.

- **Workforce:** Having a skilled and culturally capable workforce who are accessible, responsive, and supported to deliver safe and effective health care.
- **Infrastructure:** Ensuring that the health system is resilient and has the digital and physical infrastructure it needs to meet people's needs now and into the future.

The Government expects that health care and services delivered in New Zealand are safe, easy to navigate, understandable and welcoming to users, and are continuously improving.

The measures and expectations associated with achieving these priority areas are documented in the GPS.

Aligned to the Government priorities, the health system needs to accelerate action to prevent and respond to the Health Targets and Mental Health and Addiction Targets, and to proactively respond to five non-communicable diseases: cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, diabetes, and poor mental health; and address five modifiable risk factors: alcohol, tobacco, poor nutrition, physical inactivity and adverse social and environmental factors.

The GPS also sets clear expectations for priorities for populations with high health needs, addressing the unfair differences in their health needs and improving their health outcomes.

Participants are required to undertake a quality improvement project during the programme. The project must be aligned and focus on the expectations outlined in the GPS.

Applications will be reviewed considering how they align with the GPS. For more information, you can review the GPS at <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/government-policy-statement-health-2024-2027>.

Benefits of taking part

Programme participants will:

- join a growing network of health care professionals using improvement science to enhance health outcomes for consumers and whānau
- become confident in how and when to use quality improvement methods and tools to improve care for consumers and whānau
- be supported to undertake an improvement project that is both meaningful to their team and aligned with national priorities
- engage in a nationwide programme of work where equity in outcomes and experiences of care are achieved across all regions of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Who should apply

The 2025 Facilitators programme is designed for health care workers who have a significant interest in learning about how to improve health care delivery at a practical level and can lead a small project in their workplace with the support of their organisation.

Previous knowledge and skills of participants

This course is designed for people who may already have some introductory knowledge and experience in the application of quality improvement tools and methods.

Content and delivery

The programme is designed to integrate learning and doing. Each learner applies tools, skills and knowledge to an improvement project that is of value to their team or area of work with a scope that is realistic for the timeframe.

The programme will support participants to:

- understand the Aotearoa New Zealand health and disability context and incorporate Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori principles to support the weaving of these principles through improvement activities across the sector with a focus on reducing inequities
- use the Model for Improvement to drive equitable and successful quality improvement projects, supported by a range of improvement tools to understand the problem and generate change ideas
- apply basic Excel measurement tools and methods
- understand basic concepts around teamwork, change management and psychological safety.

Participants will use the skills and knowledge gained to undertake an improvement project that is of value to their team or area of work with a scope that is realistic for the timeframe.

Expectations for attendance and participation

The programme has been carefully designed so that every session delivers learning that is essential to becoming an effective improvement facilitator. As such, we expect full attendance and participation for the entire duration of the programme, with 90 percent attendance required for completion. We require attendance at workshops for the full day(s).

Time commitment

The Improving together: Facilitators Programme requires a commitment of up to approximately 0.2 full-time equivalents (FTEs) per week from each participant over six months – approximately 200 hours in total. This includes:

- nine online sessions via Microsoft Teams Meetings (Tuesdays 10.00 am–12.00 pm)
- three six-hour online workshops
- project work
- self-directed learning and course work between scheduled sessions.

Please refer to the schedule below.

Completion requirements

The following activities are required to complete the programme:

- pre-programme eLearning modules (to be completed before the first virtual workshop):
 - Improving together: Introduction – approximately 2 hours (recommended)
 - Co-design in health: all modules – approximately 2.5 hours (required)
- pre- and post-programme assessment survey of skills and knowledge
- project charter
- storyboard outlining your quality improvement project that meets the assessment criteria
- attendance (90 percent) and participation in the learning sessions (outlined in the table below), including the required online modules and other course work. Full attendance is required at the workshop sessions.

A comprehensive schedule of activities and submission dates will be provided when the programme commences.

Live participation is required for most online sessions. Some sessions that contribute to attendance will be recorded so participants may catch these up if necessary. This is only considered suitable to cover for extenuating circumstances. Please refer to our absences and extension policies for more information.

Learning session schedule

| Date | Format | Time |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| 18 February 2025 | Session 1: Launch (Whakawhanaungatanga – participants and sponsors attend) | 10am–12pm |
| 4 March | Session 2 | 10am–12pm |
| 18 March | Workshop 1 online | 6 hours |
| 1 April | Session 3 | 10am–12pm |
| 29 April | Session 4 | 10am–12pm |
| 13 May | Session 5 | |
| 27 May | Workshop 2 online | 6 hours |
| 10 June | Session 6 | 10am–12pm |
| 24 June | Session 7 | 10am–12pm |
| 8 July | Workshop 3 online | 6 hours |
| 22 July | Session 8 | 10am–12pm |
| 5 August | Session 9 | 10am–12pm |
| TBC - September | Final course day and graduation: in-person | 1 day |

Project sponsor

Project sponsors are pivotal to the participant's success. The project sponsor is the senior leader accountable to the organisation for the specific project that the participant will be working on.

The role of the project sponsor is to:

- sign off on the project charter or plan
- attend regular project progress meetings (we recommend monthly)
- provide appropriate resources for the project
- maintain the priority of the project in the face of competing demands
- remove barriers to testing and implementing changes
- communicate the project story and progress to others in the organisation.

We recommend that each sponsor participates in the first online session before workshop 1 to fully understand the course expectations.

Improvement project

Each participant will undertake an improvement project to apply the theories and methods being learned in the programme. This project should be important to the team or work area and be realistic and scoped so it can be well established within the six-month programme.

Each participant will devote up to eight hours a week to working on their improvement project in their organisation. Participants will aim to run some tests of change and may be ready to implement some of these changes by the end of the programme.

Participants will be required to present on the progress of their project as required, including charters, data analysis, process observations and tests of change. Any data presented or submitted will not be shared outside the programme unless specific permission is sought and given.

Participants are expected to regularly share progress updates with their manager and the project sponsor, including alerting them to any issues or concerns with the project.

Refer to Appendix One for guidance on an appropriate project.

Technical requirements

Participants must have a stable internet connection for online sessions which enables the use of their camera (note: it is preferable that participants have their video on during online sessions to interact with faculty and other participants). They will need access to Microsoft Excel.

LearnOnline

All resources and programme activities are organised from the LearnOnline learning management system. Participants will need a login for LearnOnline if they do not have one already. Instructions will be provided for this.

Textbooks and other resources

All textbooks and other resources will be made available via LearnOnline.

Fees and expenses

There are no course fees for this programme.

Organisations will be required to cover the costs of releasing staff, essential equipment such as a laptop, time allocated for participation in programme activities: workshop days, all online sessions, quality improvement project work and self-directed learning between sessions and associated travel to the graduation day.

How to apply

Applications are now open for the 2025 Facilitators programme. Please:

- liaise with your manager and sponsor to ensure your capacity, and an appropriate project to work through
- consider how your project will align with the GPS
- complete the included application form and email it back to learning.capability@tewhatuora.govt.nz by **5pm, Friday 29 November 2024**

Successful applicants will be informed by Friday 13 December 2024.

If you have any questions, please contact learning.capability@tewhatuora.govt.nz, with the subject line: Improving together: Facilitator programme.

Appendix one: Project guidance

Each participant will undertake an improvement project to apply the theory and methods learned in the programme, including the Model for Improvement.

High level considerations

FIRST AND FOREMOST: What is the **problem** that has been identified? The project description should **not** start off with the solutions and how the organisation intends to implement these.

- Is working on the problem within the participant's scope? Will they be able to lead a project or piece of work to create change?
- Can a series of measures around the problem be developed?
- Will the participant have access to data to show that any change ideas that might be implemented will make an improvement?

Scope

The project should be sized so you can obtain results and be completed within the duration of the teaching programme (six months). It's important that over the duration of the programme that change ideas can be tested on a small scale so that participants can learn, adapt, and test again.

What to avoid

- Anything that is not easily measurable: this will include projects that aim to improve teamwork, raise morale, or improve communication
- Anything that is unachievable: projects that require a change in legislation to achieve the project aim, have no senior leadership support and/or no team to work on it
- Quality assurance work: developing or meeting standards, regulations etc. This is usually work that is planned to happen, and where the solution is often planned and expected. Quality assurance and improvement are similar but not the same.
- Setting up new services: establishing quality programmes, developing new measurement systems, service models, and education programmes.

Equity

This section should specifically outline any patient groups that have been identified that may be receiving inequitable care – this could include Māori or Pacific Island consumers and whānau, Asian communities, members of the rainbow community, consumers with disabilities. Is there currently data that shows how the problem might disproportionately affect any specific groups of consumers? Try and be specific and avoid generalities. Remember it's not expected to provide solutions at this stage, just identifying the problem.

Finally a reminder...

Keep it small. How to spread and scale up your successful changes is part of the programme, so start out with one team, ward or area or a small cohort. It will be easier to test and measure the changes you're implementing.