

# Building a culture of continuous improvement at Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

March 2024

## Our Mission

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is a community and mental health trust, providing a wide range of services to people of all ages living in Berkshire. We employ approximately 5,000 colleagues who operate from over 60 sites across Berkshire, as well as out in people's homes and in various community settings.

We deliver joined up physical and mental health services, helping people to remain independent at home for as long as possible and providing the care and support that best meets the needs of our patients, in the most suitable location.

*Our mission is to maximise independence and quality of life.*

In 2016, Berkshire Healthcare was rated as "Good" by the CQC and the board were committed to improve further and become an "Outstanding" provider.

Learning from high-performing healthcare providers, nationally and internationally, led us to understand that an improvement culture was key – a culture in which leaders were passionate about the delivery of high-quality services, were committed to organisational development, and had a clear strategy that was understood by all; as well as a culture in which colleagues and service users were enabled to become problem solvers following a continuous improvement method.

Following a thorough selection process, Berkshire Healthcare began working together in a strategic partnership with Catalysis and KPMG to develop and embed our own approach to quality improvement (QI).

## Our Approach

Berkshire Healthcare set out to establish, refine and embed an approach to QI that would deliver the improvement in care and outcomes required, but would also engage, motivate and empower colleagues to lead continuous improvement in their daily work.

The approach shared by KPMG was based on Lean principles, specifically that value is defined by the 'customer' and that we are constantly seek out new ways of improving and perfecting our processes.

Our partnership with Catalysis was based on their approach to principle-based leadership behaviours and the development and coaching of senior leaders in these practices.

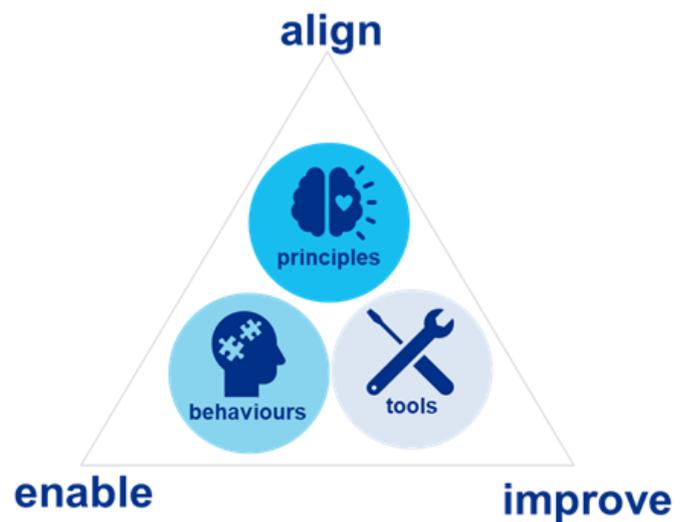
In 2017, Berkshire Healthcare embarked on an improvement journey, which was led by the Board and their personal commitment to visibly champion the QI methodology, as well as building their own skills through the practice of principle-based improvement behaviours.

The Berkshire Healthcare approach to QI is based on the key objectives of any 'Lean' transformation - to establish alignment, enable people, and build a culture of continuous improvement - the three dimensions of the Shingo Model

### Creating alignment

Creating alignment requires everyone to understand what the direction of the organisation is, what the key priorities are, and what their role is achieving these priorities.

This strategy deployment requires identifying a small number of strategic priorities ('True North' goals and 'Breakthrough Objectives') and cascading these through the organisation.

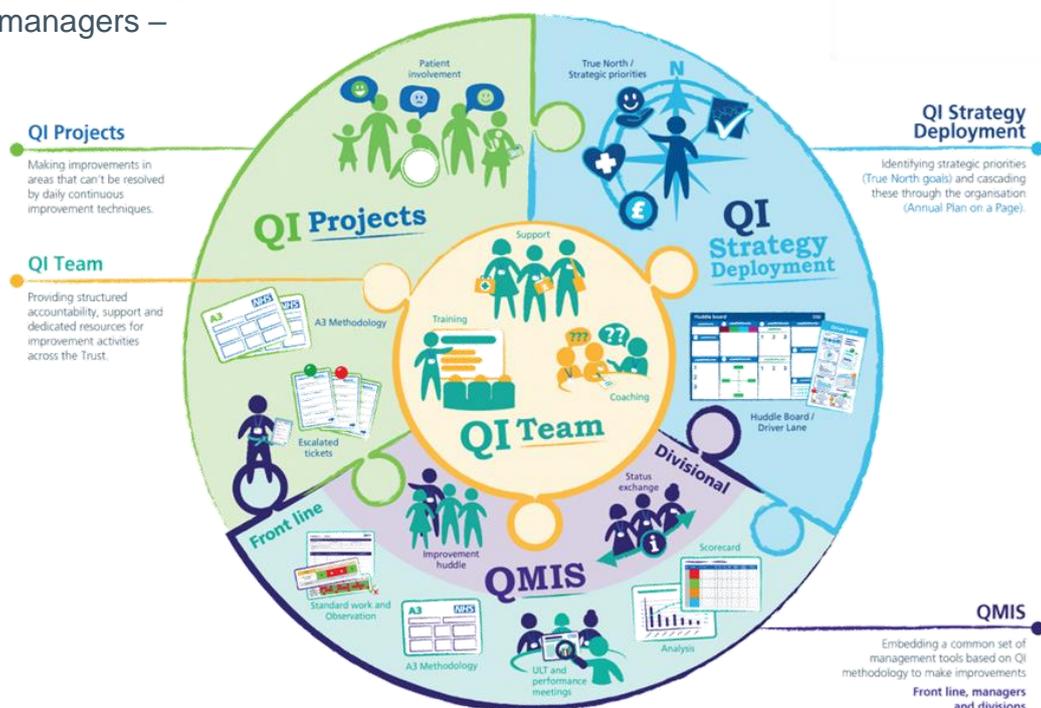


Our approach to strategy deployment provides clarity on the improvement outcomes that we want to achieve and enables our services to understand and contribute their part in the larger picture.

### Enabling improvement

Enabling improvement required a combination of changes to the way leaders approached their roles, and the creation of a management system which supported daily improvement where the work is done. A significant investment was made in leadership development and bringing about a shift for leaders and managers –

from 'doing' to 'enabling' frontline colleagues through adopting a coaching style. Based on Shingo principles, this coaching style leans on the need for humility as a pre-requisite for learning and improvement.



The Quality Management Improvement System also supports alignment and escalation of performance, quality and safety information through scorecards and a cascading governance structure.

This approach supports the cascading of priorities from board to ward, but also bottom-up identified local problem-solving in a consistent and transparent manner

Alongside this, a further investment was made in the development of the Quality Management and Improvement System (QMIS) as a whole system for changing the way we approach QI across the organisation.

QMIS provides a set of interlinking tools that we have learnt to apply flexibly to all the teams within the Trust. These tools include the use of improvement huddle boards (physical and virtual), A3 problem solving, root-cause analysis, scorecards and measurement, and plan-do-study-act tests of change.

Through the application of QMIS, teams can maximise the problem-solving power of all colleagues, as well as our patients and carers - giving them the opportunity to fix the issues they face in their everyday work - and to apply QI practices to their contribution to the organisational 'True North' goals and 'Breakthrough Objectives'.



## The role of leaders in improvement

*“A leader’s willingness to seek input, listen carefully and continuously learn creates an environment where associates feel respected and energized and give freely of their creative abilities. Improvement is only possible when people are willing to acknowledge their vulnerability and abandon bias and prejudice in their pursuit of a better way.” – Shingo Institute*

## Supporting improvement

Supporting improvement, as part of the whole-Trust approach to QI, required establishing a common way of working across the organisation using the relevant tools and methods to solve problems and improve performance.

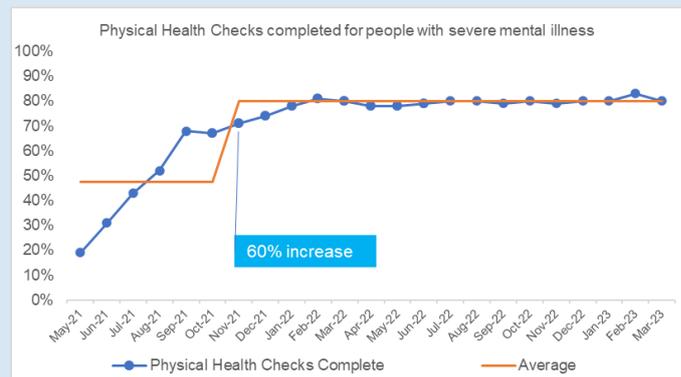
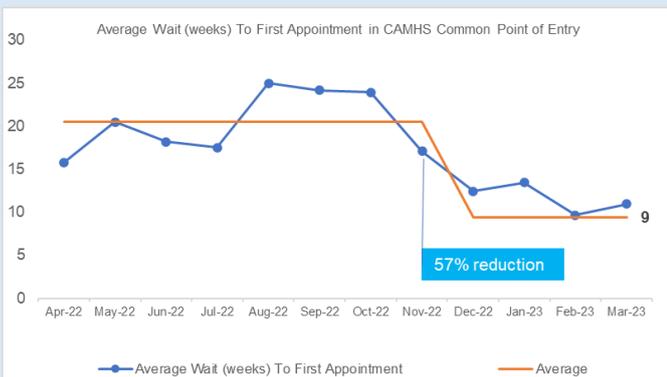
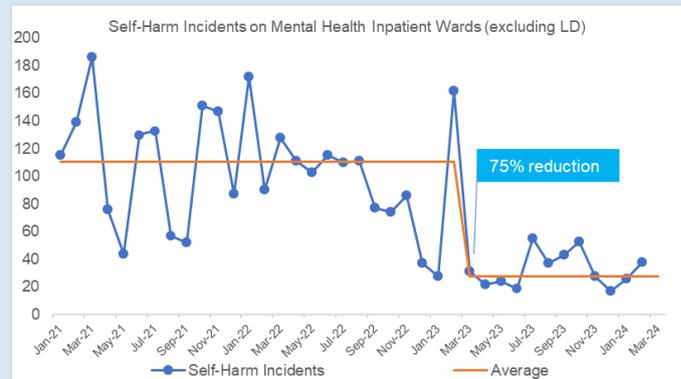
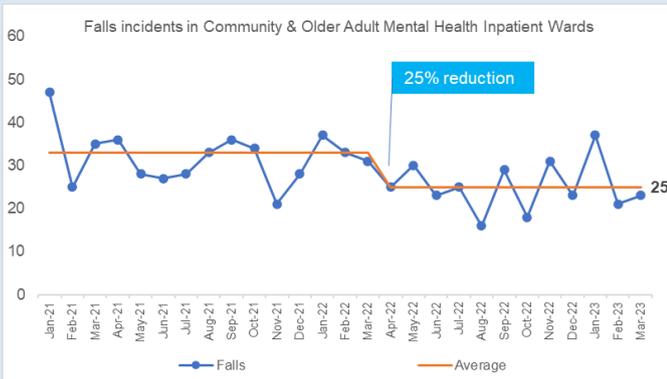
Like many organisations, we provide QI training at several levels and the aim of all our training, support and coaching is to build capability in others. To enable them to demonstrate their ability to use improvement methods and practices intentionally and systematically, to change processes and generate improved performance. This goes beyond the ability to learn and retain knowledge and focusses on creating the potential for sustainable improvement.



## Delivering results

Berkshire Healthcare set out to embed an approach to QI that would deliver improvements in care and outcomes for the people we serve. We have been able to demonstrate results in some of our organisational breakthrough objectives (reducing inpatient falls,

reducing self-harm incidents and increasing physical health checks for people with severe mental illness), as well as in team-level 'Driver metrics' (reducing wait to first appointment for CAMHS Common Point of Entry, for example).



# Improving culture

We also set out to engage, motivate and empower colleagues to lead continuous improvement in their daily work and, by ceding power to teams and enabling them with tools and skills to practice continuous improvement where the work is done, we also aimed to give colleagues more control to make changes and help them feel more engaged in their work



National Staff Survey results show improvement in questions relating to colleagues' ability to make improvements and to be involved in how changes are made.

Since 2022, Berkshire Healthcare have ranked in the top 1 to 2% of all NHS Trusts in the NHS Staff Survey questions:

*"I am able to make suggestions to improve the work of my team."*

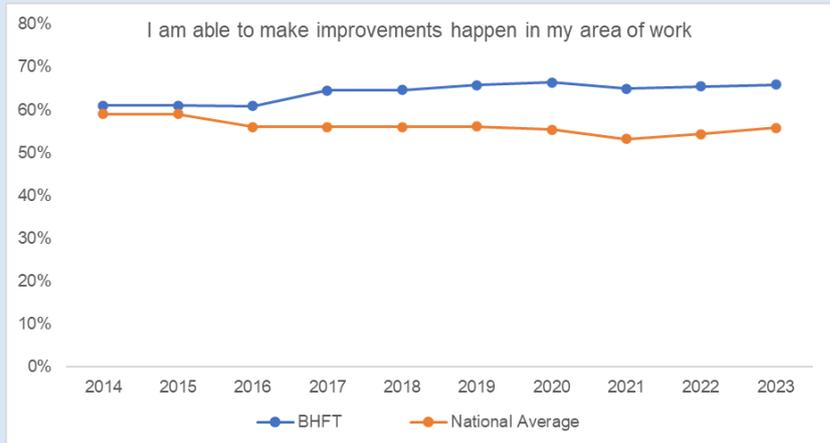
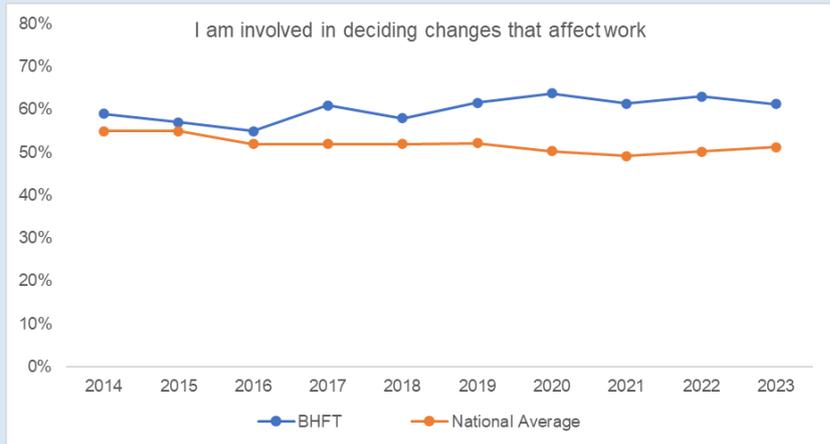
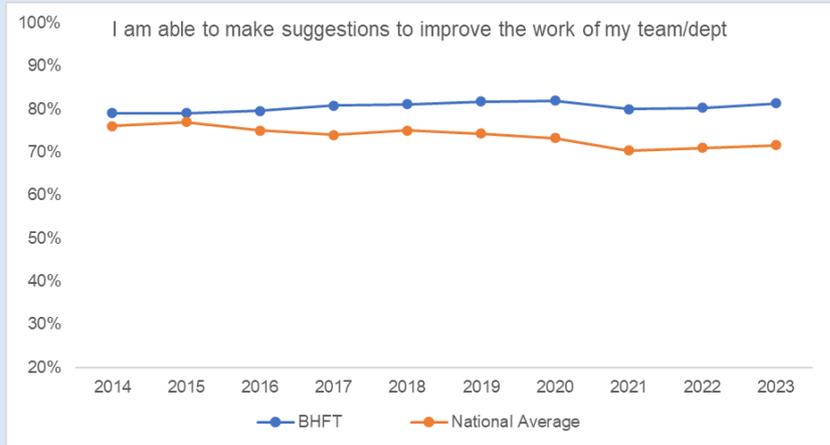
**4<sup>th</sup> out of 190 NHS Trusts**

*"I am involved in deciding changes that effect my work."*

**1<sup>st</sup> out of 190 NHS Trusts**

*"I am able to make improvements happen in my area of work."*

**3<sup>rd</sup> out of 190 NHS Trusts**



## Next steps

There have been several factors to Berkshire Healthcare's success in developing a sustainable QI approach and harnessing this to deliver results for service users and colleagues alike.

Firstly, the board-led commitment to QI - both to the theory of the use of a systematic, Trust-wide approach; and to the practice of principle-based leadership behaviours that are required to change culture.

Secondly, the clarity and consistency-of-purpose provided by the approach to strategy deployment has enable all our teams to know the improvement outcomes that we want to achieve and to understand their own contribution to these.

Finally, the Quality Management Improvement System (QMIS) has released the problem-solving capacity of colleagues; enabling those who are closest to the problems to find and test solutions using common ways of working, methods and tools.



As well as continuing to pursue these approaches and continuously improve our own approach to QI, in the next phase of the Berkshire Healthcare journey we are increasingly turning the QI capabilities we have developed in previous years to addressing issues of equity and health inequalities.

This requires us to harness the same inclusive problem-solving approaches that have delivered results in safety and efficiency measures, to reducing inequalities in access, experience and outcome for patients, as well as supporting the anti-racism commitment made by our Board in 2023.



## Contact for further information

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If you would like to know more about the continuous improvement journey at Berkshire Healthcare, please email [QI@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:QI@berkshire.nhs.uk)



[berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](http://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)