

Job description



Job title: Head of design and collaboration / Q Labs network

12 month maternity cover contract

Full-time hours (part-time would be considered)

Job Purpose

This is a pivotal role in one of the Health Foundation's flagship programmes. The post will lead work at the forefront of collaborative improvement with a range of stakeholders across the health and care sector.

The postholder will lead the development of the Q Lab network and, working with others, will develop and lead implementation of the future strategy for this evolving initiative. They will lead the methodological development of Labs across the UK, working with senior stakeholders to set the vision and strategy for these Labs and leading and managing the delivery. As well as directly line managing two individuals, the postholder will work across the Q team operating in a matrix approach to identify and address opportunities to align priorities and develop shared vision. They will provide specialist support and advice as needed.

A senior and outward-facing member of the Q leadership team, this post will work extensively with partners and other strategic stakeholders to understand needs, and shape, deliver and continuously improve what Q does. This will require building credibility and a strong personal network, providing thought leadership in relevant areas, often leading the way for the health sector. A highly visible leader of people and a champion for iterative improvement and excellent and innovative team processes, the Head of design and collaboration will oversee a complex portfolio of day-to-day delivery, working with others to develop Q for the long term. This high-profile programme relies on a network of wider partnerships, and this role will be a key connection point for many external stakeholders, working with others in the team to ensure our wider relationships are sufficiently strong to achieve the ultimate aims of Q.

Accountable to: Q Initiative Director

Salary: Level 18

Hours per week: 37.5

A willingness to undertake some travel is required for this role.

Key responsibilities

Leading the Q Labs network

- Be accountable for the overall strategy and delivery of the Q Labs. Iteratively develop the lab approach, providing strategic leadership to Q Lab UK and the growing Q Lab network. Make appropriate connections with other relevant activity across the UK and internationally.
- Provide intellectual and practical leadership for the Q Lab network so that it is respected as innovative, authoritative, and credible. Proactively explore ways in which the learning from Q can make a significant contribution to the field of improvement research and practice.
- Ensure effective design, development and delivery of the Q Labs network, including leading the methodological development of new Labs across the UK and Ireland.
- Secure agreement with partners for future Labs, developing our partnership approach. Work with host organisation at a strategic level, both in the establishment and delivery of strategic partnerships with Q Lab UK and future Labs. Ensure Labs align with our strategic ambitions and take advantage of the full use of the Lab approach to achieve impact, including through coaching and guidance direct to Lab teams.
- Delegate leadership of key strands of activity while overseeing quality and performance outcomes. Manage the overall operational delivery of the Labs network.
- Lead strategic programmes of work in Q Lab UK to support health and care leaders in the generation of ideas, prototyping, and testing of ideas in practice. Taking a developmental approach, support stakeholders to learn and apply new techniques for dealing with complex problems.
- Problem solve to meet agreed milestones and quality standards, intervening where these are particularly complex issues to resolve and proactively manage risks. Work with and through individual team members to adapt the style and approach needed for more predictable aspects of work as well as more emergent and adaptive aspects.
- Focus on designing for maximum impact, embedding data measurement and quality metrics throughout the portfolio, taking ownership and responsibility for how the team approaches operational delivery.

Design and collaboration

- Build an effective design and collaboration function, with a clear vision and processes that fit well with the overall needs of the initiative and the wider team. This includes for example designing an appropriate mix of using internal and external capacity to meet the needs of the initiative.

- Lead the ongoing development of our approaches to design and collaboration across Q, to meet the needs of Q's future strategy and evolution. This includes developing our practice and standards with regard to how we bring people together in an environment that's inclusive and effective at our events.
- Ensure the Foundation's commitment to social justice and responsiveness to cultural diversity is demonstrated in all activities the post holder is involved in. Provide strategic leadership for work on equity, diversity and inclusion across Q. Continue to strengthen Q's reputation as a source of innovation and collaboration expertise, developing personal credibility as a leader in relevant fields.
- Scan the national and international environment and develop strong networks of contacts within design, innovation and improvement, to gather applicable intelligence and share our insights. Share, translate and apply learning from other sectors and initiatives as appropriate.

Service area and function team leadership and skills development

- Provide strategic oversight and steer for the service area. Develop a coherent vision for the service area, that meets the needs of beneficiaries and is exciting and deliverable for the team. Lead the development of annual plans and KPIs, that coherently contribute to Q's overall objectives and theory of change.
- Work with functional leads to identify quality outcomes and the resources needed to deliver the objectives for the service area. Work collaboratively to ensure effective use of capacity across the whole of Q, anticipating and proactively addressing conflicts and managing risks to delivery. Ensure that the needs and focus of functional and service area leadership are appropriately balanced in this role.
- Be accountable for the effective use of funding and other resources available to Q for the service area. Work with the service area team to understand and improve how resources are used. Spot and develop new opportunities for generating income that align with Q's overall strategy. Working with the Head of Operations, develop the annual budget for Q Labs. Manage and monitor the agreed budget, acting as an authorised signatory. Provide information and reports as required to adhere to good financial governance.
- Drawing on extensive design and collaboration expertise, provide inspiring leadership for the service area team. Work to motivate, enable and empower people to lead the work. Coach and support the group of people from across the Q team that come together to deliver what's required. Ensure ways of working are fit for purpose and the Service Area team are clear about the objectives of the work, the fit with wider strategy and the approach to implementation. Ensure high quality standards are developed and maintained
- Embed and role model a culture of learning and improvement, using appropriate data and insight to guide decisions about the service area. Ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place for evaluating the service area and using the learning that emerged. Support the team to adopt an open, reflective and innovative approach to working collaboratively.

- Proactively anticipate and contribute to Q's planning, governance and risk management processes, ensuring consistently high-quality reports and sessions appropriate for the audience as required. Lead thinking around risk-taking in relation to the Labs, spotting opportunities for testing new approaches that draw on evaluative learning and take the Lab in new directions in pursuit of maximum impact. Manage internal and external stakeholders in setting and reviewing risk appetite.
- Act as a key spokesperson for the service area as needed at Q's Board and when taking proposals through other organisations' governance processes.
- Develop and oversee processes to manage quality standards, carefully balancing the requirements of an emerging initiative to be flexible and subject to astute judgements, with the need to standardise and streamline where possible.
- Directly line manage 2 members of staff and provide guidance and leadership in a matrix management approach to a range of other team members. The post-holder will be required to make best use of the expertise and skills of individuals for whom they do not have line management relationships, requiring flexibility and highly-tuned people skills.
- Help to set the tone and culture of the team, encouraging and role modelling a collaborative, learning and results-orientated approach. Help to shape, lead and contribute to team building, team meetings, and to 360 feedback and development of staff across Q as required.

Communication, stakeholder and partnership management

- As a key external face for Q, manage a range of stakeholder relationships including with Directors working across the health and care sector and partner organisations collaborating on key areas of work.
- As a visible figurehead for Q, build a reputation for high quality presentations, articles, reports and other communication outputs that reflect the insights and values behind Q.
- Develop partnership models and approaches that draw on and develop our understanding of best-practice in collaborative working, and creatively explore relationships (both formal and informal) that will allow Q to meet its aims most effectively. This will require navigating sensitive and complex situations and stakeholder relationships.
- Work closely with senior leaders across national and local health and care organisations to make strategic connections with Qs work, raising the profile of the initiative and astutely positioning the Labs alongside other system offers.
- With the Q leadership team, set the tone for how we engage with external partners, stakeholders and members and coach others to respond positively and proactively in more challenging context, intervening as necessary.

- Scan the horizon to understand emerging issues and topics for the health and care sector as well as organisations that might be suitable for partnership and collaboration on key strands of work.
- Work closely with communication experts to develop creative approaches to communicating outputs and reaching new audiences. This will include, but not be limited to, shaping written and visual communication outputs and presenting and leading interactive sessions at external events targeted and tailored to reach the wide range of audiences Q seeks to reach.

General

- As a member of Q's Leadership team, play a key part in setting the strategic direction and key operational priorities across Q. This involves supporting the Director and the wider leadership team to manage and monitor against current priorities and undertake further development work in key areas of emerging activity.
- Actively work across the Health Foundation to identify links with other strategic priorities and take opportunities to align and collaborate where possible. Work with others to ensure we are a highly functioning team and ensure effective governance is incorporated into our ways of working
- Deputise internally and externally for the Associate Director and Director of Q as needed

Person specification

Health and care system understanding

- A senior leader with a track record of working to improve the quality of health and / care, with a strong network of contacts regionally and nationally.
- A comprehensive understanding of health and care in the United Kingdom. Detailed knowledge of the distinctive roles that local organisations and ‘system stewards’ play in seeking to address complex quality and performance issues in health and care and the ways this varies across the UK.

Systems analysis and improvement

- Sound knowledge of improvement, innovation and design approaches, complexity and systems thinking, with experience of using these in practice to achieve impact. Able to draw on a wide range of approaches and methodologies, carefully adapting their use to fit the context.
- Able to analyse complex issues swiftly and critically, appraise available evidence. Able to coach and work with a team to enable coherent, purposeful and time efficient analysis of a large volume of complex material.
- A good degree or equivalent experience involving independent analysis of complex issues, ideally in a subject directly relevant to design, improvement or healthcare delivery.

Strategic partnerships

- Strategically creative and able to spot opportunities for partnership, collaboration and alignment with other organisations and initiatives which could advance Q’s aims.
- A track record of developing partnerships with other bodies to further organisational objectives, with experience of managing complex and contentious joint projects to a successful outcome. Confidence navigating both the formal and informal dimensions of effective partnership working.

Collaboration and inclusion

- Awareness of the different professional groups in the world of health and care and how backgrounds often influence practice. Able to create opportunities for effective connections and collaboration between groups. Experience of collaborative design and co-production with diverse groups, including service users.
- Commitment to diversity and inclusion – in employment and service delivery, with the ability to provide strategic leadership for this agenda across Q.

Communications and influencing

- Highly developed communication skills including writing (for internal purposes and for external reports and publications) as well as oral presentational skills. Able to be an effective advocate for Q and The Health Foundation. Able to communicate complex ideas in a way that connects with highly diverse audiences.
- Exceptional networking and influencing skills and the ability to confidently coach others in developing their networks and relationships with others.

- Flexible and consistently listens to take account of the views of others. Open, communicative and approachable, comfortable interacting virtually and in person with people from all backgrounds and levels of seniority.

Leadership and management

- Experience of designing and managing complex and emerging programmes involving multiple work streams and external delivery partners, where iterative and purposeful reflection and improvement is essential to success. Demonstrated ability to deliver against a busy portfolio of work successfully.
- The ability to select confidently from a range of different leadership and programme management approaches, demonstrating tenacity and flexibility to achieve outcomes.
- Experience of leading teams, including where you have direct line management and where you have no formal line of authority, and are providing coaching and leadership to teams and individuals. Able to work with and through others to deliver high quality work to tight deadlines. Able to help translate fluid or complex objectives into clear work packages to enable members of the team to deliver.
- Able to spot and develop options for attracting and making best use of resources. Able to focus on key priorities in the face of competing priorities.

October 2021