



# Supporting Leadership for **Quality Improvement** and **Safety**

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An **Attributes Framework**  
for **Health** and **Social Care**

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November 2014

In 2011, Charlotte McArdle and Dr Anne Kilgallen, the then Co-chairs of the Quality 2020 Task 4 group, were tasked with developing an outline proposal for a multi-professional leadership programme. Such a programme would need sufficient capacity to provide initial and on-going leadership and management development within the HSC. Having scoped the system, it was recognised that excellent arrangements were already in place for leadership development across a range of providers. However there was a significant deficit in leadership skills for Quality Improvement and Safety.

The Health and Social Care Safety Forum and the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) led the development of this *Attributes Framework* in partnership with key stakeholders within Health and Social Care, including Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professions, Social Work and General Practice (See Appendix 1, Membership of Steering Group).

The Q2020 Task 4 Co-chairs would like to acknowledge the input of many groups from across Northern Ireland and further afield. We would like specifically to thank the Improvement Fellows of the Institute of Healthcare Improvement (Boston). We are also indebted to a wide range of contributors for their input, from those in undergraduate training to those who run and oversee our services.

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# Introduction

The purpose of this framework is to:

1. Assist individuals in assessing:
  - a. their current attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) in relation to leadership for quality improvement and safety
  - and*
  - b. their learning and development needs for their current role or for future roles.
2. Help organisations to build the capability and capacity of the workforce<sup>1</sup> to participate in, and lead, initiatives which develop quality care and services.

In this document, *The Attributes Framework Supporting Leadership for Quality Improvement and Safety in Health and Social Care* will be referred to hereafter as the Attributes Framework.

## Leadership for Quality means...

***Making it possible for everyone, everyday to do a better job with greater satisfaction, learning from and with their colleagues, in order to improve services.***

***Adapted from Deming (1986)***

## Quality Improvement and Safety is Everyone's Job

It is essential for all of us working, or in training, in Health and Social Care to understand the importance of delivering person-centred, quality care to our patients and service users (Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) 2011 and Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) 2011).

The *Attributes Framework* is informed by the principles and values within the Quality 2020 strategy (DHSSPS 2011). It is designed to enable staff and those in training, to fulfil the requirements of their role and, as a result, put patients and service users where they are entitled to be – the first and foremost consideration of our service (Francis, 2013). It can also be used in conjunction with other competency frameworks relevant to your role (see Table 1), and should also be included in educational curricula for those in training.

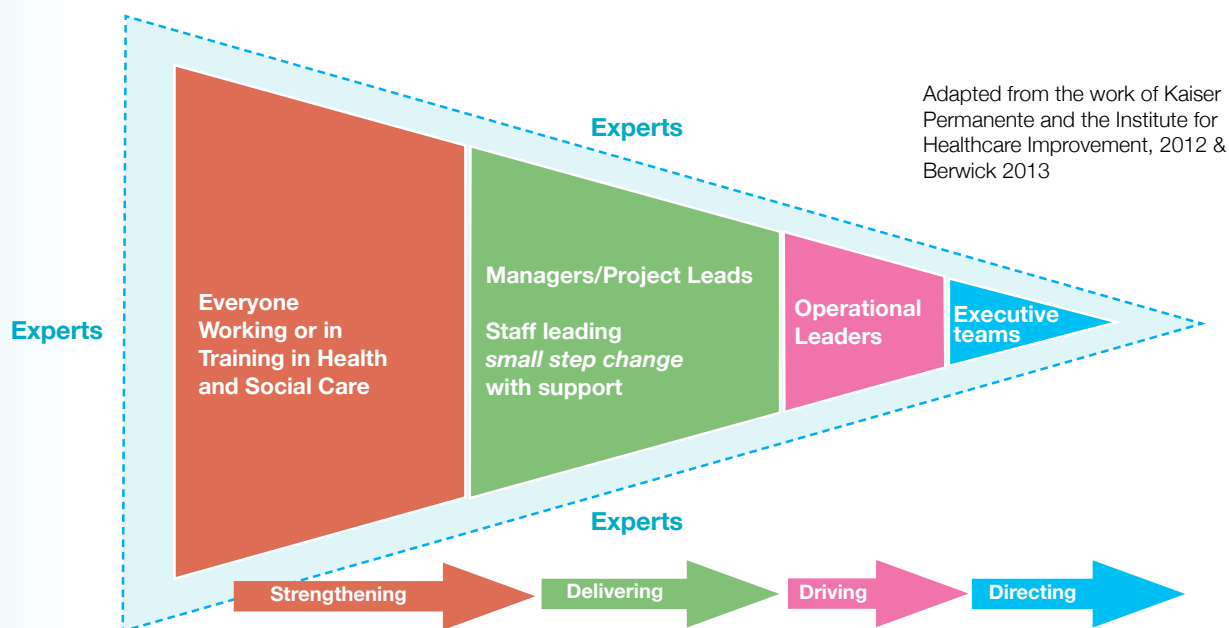
## Quality Improvement and Safety – YOUR Journey of Learning and Development

It is important that your leader/line manager and the organisation, support you in developing your knowledge, skills and attitudes in quality improvement and safety, by providing the learning and development opportunities/activities suitable for your role. Figure 1 represents the learning and development journey in quality improvement and safety for all those employed by, or training in, the Health and Social Care system.

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<sup>1</sup> Workforce refers to all staff contributing in Health and Social Care. This also includes those on pre-registration training programmes.

**Figure 1: Learning and Development Journey for Quality Improvement and Safety**



### The Attributes Framework

The Attributes Framework (pages 5 – 6) identifies the quality improvement and safety attributes you require for your role and the level at which you work, in the organisation. Through your appraisal or supervision meetings or through mentorship (for those in training), you should be supported in assessing your existing attributes in relation to quality improvement and safety and, therefore, in planning the learning and development needed for you to progress along your journey.

### How you can use the Attributes Framework

The attributes in the framework have been converted into a competence assessment tool (pages 7 – 11). The *Attributes Competence Assessment Tool* will help you and your manager or supervisor choose learning and development activities suitable to enhance your competence in the attributes at the level appropriate to your role. The intention is to assist your progress on the journey to competence in quality improvement and safety.

The Attributes Framework and Competence Assessment Tool are accessible at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/quality\\_strategy\\_2020](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/quality_strategy_2020)

**Table 1. Some of the Competency Frameworks which may be used in conjunction with the Attributes Framework**

Knowledge and Skills Framework (DH 2004)
Medical Leadership Framework (NHS Leadership Academy and Academy of Royal Colleges 2010)
Professional in Practice (NISSC 2014)
Competence Assessment Tools for Ward Sisters, Charge Nurses and Team Leaders (NIPEC 2010 and 2012)
Healthcare Leadership Model (NHS Leadership Academy 2013)

## Attributes Framework for those providing Care and Services for Patients, Service Users and their Carers

Strengthening foundations for improvement	Delivering improvement	Driving improvement	Directing improvement
Everyone working or in training in Health and Social Care.	Staff and those in training, who can lead small-step-change(s), with support, in their service.	Staff who lead team(s) or service(s) within their organisation.	Staff charged with leading quality improvement across their organisation and/or across the Health and Social Care system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I understand why and how we put patients/service users at the centre of everything we do</li> <li>• I understand what contributes to the safety of patients/service users and work with my colleagues to identify problems and help reduce risks</li> <li>• I understand what is meant by quality improvement and collect information in my area to aid improvement in patient/service user care and services</li> <li>• I understand how I can play my part in improving care and services for patients/service users</li> <li>• I take part in activities to improve the way I do my job</li> <li>• I understand the benefits of using small steps to improve care and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I understand how the culture in my workplace influences the quality and safety of care and services</li> <li>• I recognise my responsibility to question the way we work in order to improve care and services</li> <li>• I am able to work with a team to achieve <i>small-step-change</i></li> <li>• I can explain and use PDSA<sup>3</sup> cycles to make <i>small-step-change</i> to care and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I communicate effectively with diverse audiences</li> <li>• I mentor and teach others about improvement methodology</li> <li>• I understand, use and present data to improve care and services</li> <li>• I influence, negotiate and lead improvements in care and services</li> <li>• I strive to motivate and energise my colleagues</li> <li>• I demonstrate resilience in order to lead improvements in care and services</li> <li>• I facilitate and lead teams to improve the quality and safety of care and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I lead improvement in care and services, aligning priorities and removing barriers</li> <li>• I encourage, promote and support a learning culture in and/or across organisations, learning from engagement with patients/service users and their carers/families</li> <li>• I direct the implementation and spread of improvement methodology across service boundaries</li> <li>• I advise/have access to expert advice on the development of improvement measures in data, using relevant tools where appropriate</li> <li>• I monitor the quality and safety of care, understanding that measurement is for learning, not judgement</li> </ul>

**Attributes Framework for those providing Care and Services for Patients, Service Users and their Carers *continued***

Strengthening foundations for improvement	Delivering improvement	Driving improvement	Directing improvement
<p>Everyone working or in training in Health and Social Care.</p>	<p>Staff and those in training, who can lead small-step-change(s), with support, in their service.</p>	<p>Staff who lead team(s) or service(s) within their organisation.</p>	<p>Staff charged with leading quality improvement across their organisation and/or across the Health and Social Care system.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I understand the benefits of developing myself in order to care for others</li> <li>• I keep my knowledge and skills up to date</li> <li>• I develop my skills in improvement methodology</li> <li>• I work with my colleagues as an effective team member</li> <li>• I listen to patients/service users and their carers/families and share their comments with colleagues to help improve care/services</li> <li>• I understand my responsibility to speak up if something goes wrong and I know how to do this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can identify where teamwork could be more effective and I work with others to improve team performance</li> <li>• I work to involve patients/service users and their carers/families in planning care and in quality improvement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I encourage, promote and support a learning culture in my workplace</li> <li>• I listen to the voices of patients/service users and their carers/families, using their input to inform quality improvement activities</li> <li>• I use systems such as governance, quality assurance and measurement for improvement to identify for myself and team members areas for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I provide/have access to expert advice and maintain an oversight of the progress of improvement</li> <li>• I use evidence-based tools, or accepted guidance, to ensure that appropriate resources are used in the organisation</li> <li>• I direct the improvement work across the organisation and respond directly, openly and rapidly to safety alerts, early warning systems and complaints from patients/service users and staff</li> <li>• I promote transparency across the organisation</li> <li>• I provide high-level support to a multi-organisational collaborative/network, in which teams can learn from, and teach, each other</li> <li>• I pay attention to my own learning so that I enhance the way in which I direct improvement within my organisation</li> </ul>

# The Attributes Competence Assessment Tool

When you are undertaking a self-assessment, the *Attributes Competence Assessment Tool* (below) can help you identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for your role. You will be expected to discuss your self-assessment with your line manager, as part of your annual appraisal and/or personal development plan, in order to agree an action plan addressing your identified learning and development needs. If you are in training within Health and Social Care, you can discuss the results of your self-assessment with your mentor or supervisor and agree your learning and development needs.

## Assessing yourself

You should use the following rating scale to assess your learning and development needs against each of the attribute statements within your level:

**LD** I need a lot of development

**SD** I need some development

**WD** I feel I am well developed

It generally takes about 15 minutes to assess yourself against the attribute statements. When you have finished, review the number of LDs, SDs, and WDs. You can then plan, with your line manager, the learning and development activities which are relevant to your role.

## Best Practice Tips

Before starting your assessment, you may find it helpful to discuss the attribute statements with one of your peers. You can also test your self-assessment with your line manager. Be honest with yourself when thinking about your role and your learning and development needs and rate them realistically.

The *Attributes Framework and Competence Assessment Tool* can also enable you to focus on areas for career development and, where relevant, support your preparation for job interviews. They can also be used in conjunction with other frameworks and competencies relevant to your role.



# The Attributes Self-Assessment Tool

## Strengthening foundations for improvement

This component of the Attributes Framework identifies the core foundation knowledge, skills and attitudes required to deliver safe, effective, person-centred care (or person-centred services) related to your role. It is an essential requirement for everyone, either working or in training in health and social care, to be competent in all attributes at this level.

### Who for:

This applies to all staff who work, or who are in training, in health and social care.

**Rating Scale:**      **LD**    **I need a lot of development**

**SD**    **I need some development**

**WD**    **I feel I am well developed**

Attributes	LD	SD	WD
• I understand why and how we put patients/service users at the centre of everything we do			
• I understand what contributes to the safety of patients/service users and work with my colleagues to identify problems and help reduce risks			
• I understand what is meant by quality improvement and collect information in my area to aid improvement in patient/service use care and services			
• I understand how I can play my part in improving care and services for patients/service users			
• I take part in activities to improve the way I do my job			
• I understand the benefits of using small steps to improve care and services			
• I understand the benefits of developing myself in order to care for others			
• I keep my knowledge and skills up to date			
• I develop my skills in improvement methodology			
• I work with my colleagues as an effective team member			
• I listen to patients/service users and their carers/families and share their comments with colleagues to help improve care/services			
• I understand my responsibility to speak up if something goes wrong and I know how to do this			



## Delivering improvement

This component of the Attributes Framework identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to make small-step-change in a service which will lead to quality improvement.

### Who for:

This applies to staff and those in training, who can lead small-step-change(s), with support, in their service.

**Rating Scale:      LD    I need a lot of development**

**SD    I need some development**

**WD    I feel I am well developed**

Attributes	LD	SD	WD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I understand how the culture in my workplace influences the quality and safety of care and services</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I recognise my responsibility to question the way we work in order to improve care and services</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am able to work with a team to achieve small-step-change</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can explain and use PDSA cycles to make small-step-change to care and services.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can identify where teamwork could be more effective and I work with others to improve team performance</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I work to involve patients/service users and their carers/families in planning care and in quality improvement activities</li> </ul>			

## Driving improvement

This component of the Attributes Framework identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to lead quality improvement in the workplace.

### Who for:

This applies to staff who lead team(s) or service(s) within their organisation.

**Rating Scale:**      **LD**    **I need a lot of development**

**SD**    **I need some development**

**WD**    **I feel I am well developed**

Attributes	LD	SD	WD
• I communicate effectively with diverse audiences			
• I mentor and teach others about improvement methodology			
• I understand, use and present data to improve care and services			
• I influence, negotiate and lead improvements in care and services			
• I strive to motivate and energise my colleagues			
• I demonstrate resilience in order to lead improvements in care and services			
• I facilitate and lead teams to improve the quality and safety of care and services			
• I encourage, promote and support a learning culture in my workplace			
• I listen to the voices of patients/service users and their carers/families using their input to inform quality improvement activities			
• I use systems such as governance, quality assurance and measurement for improvement to identify for myself and team members areas for development			

## Directing improvement

This component of the Attributes Framework identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to advise on and lead quality improvement across service boundaries.

### Who for:

This applies to staff charged with leading quality improvement across their organisation and/through the Health and Social Care system, in Northern Ireland. These individuals are also responsible for ensuring that quality improvement is imbedded in the day-to-day work of the organisation.

**Rating Scale:**      **LD**    **I need a lot of development**

**SD**    **I need some development**

**WD**    **I feel I am well developed**

Attributes	LD	SD	WD
• I lead improvement in care and services, aligning priorities and removing barriers			
• I encourage, promote and support a learning culture in and/or across organisations, learning from engagement with patients/service users and their carers/families			
• I direct the implementation and spread of improvement methodology across service boundaries			
• I advise/have access to expert advice on the development of improvement measures and understand variation in data, using relevant tools where appropriate			
• I monitor the quality and safety of care, understanding that measurement is for learning, not judgement			
• I provide/have access to expert advice and maintain an oversight of the progress of improvement			
• I use evidence-based tools, or accepted guidance, to ensure that appropriate resources are used in the organisation			
• I direct the improvement work across the organisation and respond directly, openly and rapidly to safety alerts, early warning systems and complaints from patients/service users and staff			
• I promote transparency across the organisation			
• I provide high-level support to a multi-organisational collaborative network, in which teams can learn from, and teach, each other			
• I pay attention to my own learning so that I enhance the way in which I direct improvement within my organisation			

# Appendix 1.

## Membership of Attributes Framework Project Steering Group

Dr Gavin Lavery (Chair)	Clinical Director	HSC Safety Forum, PHA
Margaret Rogan	Consultant Midwife	Strategic Midwifery Forum
Dr David Robinson	Co Director of Nursing, Governance, Standards and Performance	Belfast HSC Trust
Dr Gerry Lynch	Consultant Psychiatrist /Clinical Director, Mental Health and Disability Services	Northern HSC Trust
Avril Redmond	Professional Lead for Nursing Medicine/Unscheduled Care & Clinical Service Lead for Renal & Neurology	Northern HSC Trust
Dr David Hill	Consultant Anaesthetist	South Eastern HSC Trust
Brenda Carson	Head of Patient Safety and Improvement	South Eastern HSC Trust
Carmel Harney	Assistant Director AHP Governance, Workforce Development & Training	Southern HSC Trust
Prof Vivien Coates	Professor of Nursing Research	Western HSC Trust
Anne Witherow	Assistant Director of Nursing	Western HSC Trust
Dr Sandra McNeill	Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist & Deputy Head of School for Obs & Gynae, NIMDTA	Western HSC Trust
Dr Keith McCollum	GP	General Practice
Rita Devlin	Senior Professional Development Officer	Royal College of Nursing
Prof Keith Gardiner Training Agency	Chief Executive	NI Medical & Dental
Dr Claire Loughrey	Director for Post-Graduate General Practice Education	NI Medical & Dental Training Agency
Maurice Devine	Assistant Head	Clinical Education Centre
Will Young	Principal Consultant	HSC Leadership Centre
Prof Tanya McCance	Co-Director Nursing Research & Development School of Nursing	University of Ulster
Leontia Hoy	Programme Co-ordinator Specialist Practice	Queen's University Belfast
Jo Browne	Inspector/Quality Reviewer Independent Health Care Team	Regulation Quality Improvement Authority
Marian O'Rourke	Professional Adviser	NI Social Care Council
Maura McKenna	Joint Chair, Regional KSF Group	Trade Union Forum
Catherine Shannon	Joint Chair, Regional KSF Group	Trade Union Forum
Charlotte McArdle	Chief Nursing Officer and Co-Chair Quality 2020 Implementation Steering Group	Department Health Social Services & Public Safety
Cathy McCusker (Project Lead)	Senior Professional Officer	NI Practice & Education Council

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