Promoting and sustaining improvement: What works?
Sustainability and spread?

- **Sustainability** means holding the gains and evolving as required, definitely not going back.
- **Spread** means that the learning which takes place in any part of the organisation is actively shared and acted upon by all parts of the organisation.
- Resulting in **improvement knowledge** that is generated anywhere in the system becoming **common knowledge** across the system leading to **improvement action**.
Example MA programmes

- Outpatient improvement
- Outpatient learning sets
- Waiting time reduction
- Support for no / one star trusts
- Cancelled operations
- Emergency access ("trolley wait") programme

Primary care collaborative
“Action on”
Changing workforce programme
Booked admissions programme
Demand management
Dental access
Pre-operative assessment
Endoscopy programme

Clinical governance board development programme
Critical care implementation programme
Cancer services collaborative
Pay modernisation
Orthopaedic collaborative
CHD collaborative
Capacity and demand prototypes
Emergency access (IDEA)
We have mastered the improvement "project" but we are a long way away from the improvement "habit"

Paul Plsek 2002
Sustainability - What does the future hold?

Performance

Good

Bad

Before Now Later

Idea! PDSA PDSA PDSA

Time
Improvement Frustrations

• The “improvement evaporation effect” (lack of sustainability)

• The “islands of improvement effect” (lack of spread)
Spread- what has been happening?

- Traditional model through waves of programmes
- Allowing opportunity for re-invention
- Links developed through both organisations and through professional groupings
- Focus more on ‘push’ than ‘pull’
What is the emerging thinking

- Efforts to disseminate information about improvement will meet only limited success if we do not recognise the importance of social networks and relationships.
- Social networks and relationships facilitate adoption of improvement ideas.
- Spread is the result of the adoption process, not the other way round.
# Spread v. Adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spread</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Push ideas out to others</td>
<td>Pull ideas into myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My agenda at the centre of a larger organisation</td>
<td>My agenda at the sharp end of delivering care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of organisational structure and hierarchy to communicate about change</td>
<td>Use of social systems to communicate about change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A focus on tools, techniques and processes</td>
<td>A focus on relationships and facilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fraser and Plsek, 2001*
Approaches to spread

- collective
- individual

push

- authority

pull
Throwing a Rock or a Bird?

“In order to adopt an idea you need to be attracted”

\[ y = x^2 - b \]

\[ f = ma \]

“attractor”

Source: Paul Plsek, based on Richard Dawkins
Creating attraction for change

‘It’s about people and relationships’

• The concept of “resistance to change” is negative and emotionally draining
• We all change naturally; at our own pace with our own rationale
• Stop speaking of “us” and “them”
• How can I make my change more naturally attractive to others?
Benefits of change

**Credible Benefits**

**Infrastructure**

**Adaptable Process**

**Fit with Goals & Culture**

**Barriers Removed**

**Monitor Progress**

**Involved & Trained**

**Senior Leadership**

**Empowered & Believe**

**Clinical Leadership**

11 key factors that increase the likelihood of sustainability and continuous improvement
The goal is to spread sustainable change