



# Allied Health Professionals Service Improvement Project

Improving Quality and Productivity

98% patient  
satisfaction

Waiting times  
**HALVED**

£5,000 savings  
a week

**BETTER ACCESS**  
for high-risk patients

**DH INFORMATION READER BOX**

<b>Policy</b>	Estates Commissioning IM & T Finance Social Care / Partnership Working
HR / Workforce Management Planning / Clinical	
<b>Document Purpose</b>	For Information
<b>Gateway Reference</b>	16027
<b>Title</b>	Allied Health Professionals Service Improvement Project: Improving Quality and Productivity
<b>Author</b>	Department of Health
<b>Publication Date</b>	May 2011
<b>Target Audience</b>	PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Care Trust CEs, Foundation Trust CEs , Medical Directors, Directors of PH, Directors of Nursing, Local Authority CEs, Directors of Adult SSs, Directors of Finance, Allied Health Professionals, GPs
<b>Circulation List</b>	
<b>Description</b>	Leaflet detailing the aims of the project, the services involved and illustrating the outcomes and learning from the project. It also includes links to some of the improvement tools used and the AHP Service Improvement learning network.
<b>Cross Ref</b>	N/A
<b>Superseded Docs</b>	N/A
<b>Action Required</b>	N/A
<b>Timing</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Details</b>	Shelagh Morris Room 5E58 Quarry House Quarry Hill Leeds LS2 7UE <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Aboutus/Chiefprofessionalofficers/Chiefhealthprofessionsofficer/index.htm">http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Aboutus/Chiefprofessionalofficers/Chiefhealthprofessionsofficer/index.htm</a>
<b>For Recipient's Use</b>	

# The challenge

The Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) Service Improvement Project ran from September 2009 to March 2011. It was set up to improve access to AHP services in England. For example, some waiting times were extremely long:

- 40 weeks for a children's wheelchair
- 272 days for an insole from an orthotics service
- 18 weeks for speech and language therapy for 472 pre-school children.

The challenge was complicated by limited management information about the quality of services and limited local ownership of data.

## Project governance

A team at the Department of Health was responsible for the progress and governance of the project, through a project board made up of professional stakeholders and patients and chaired by the Chief Health Professions Officer.



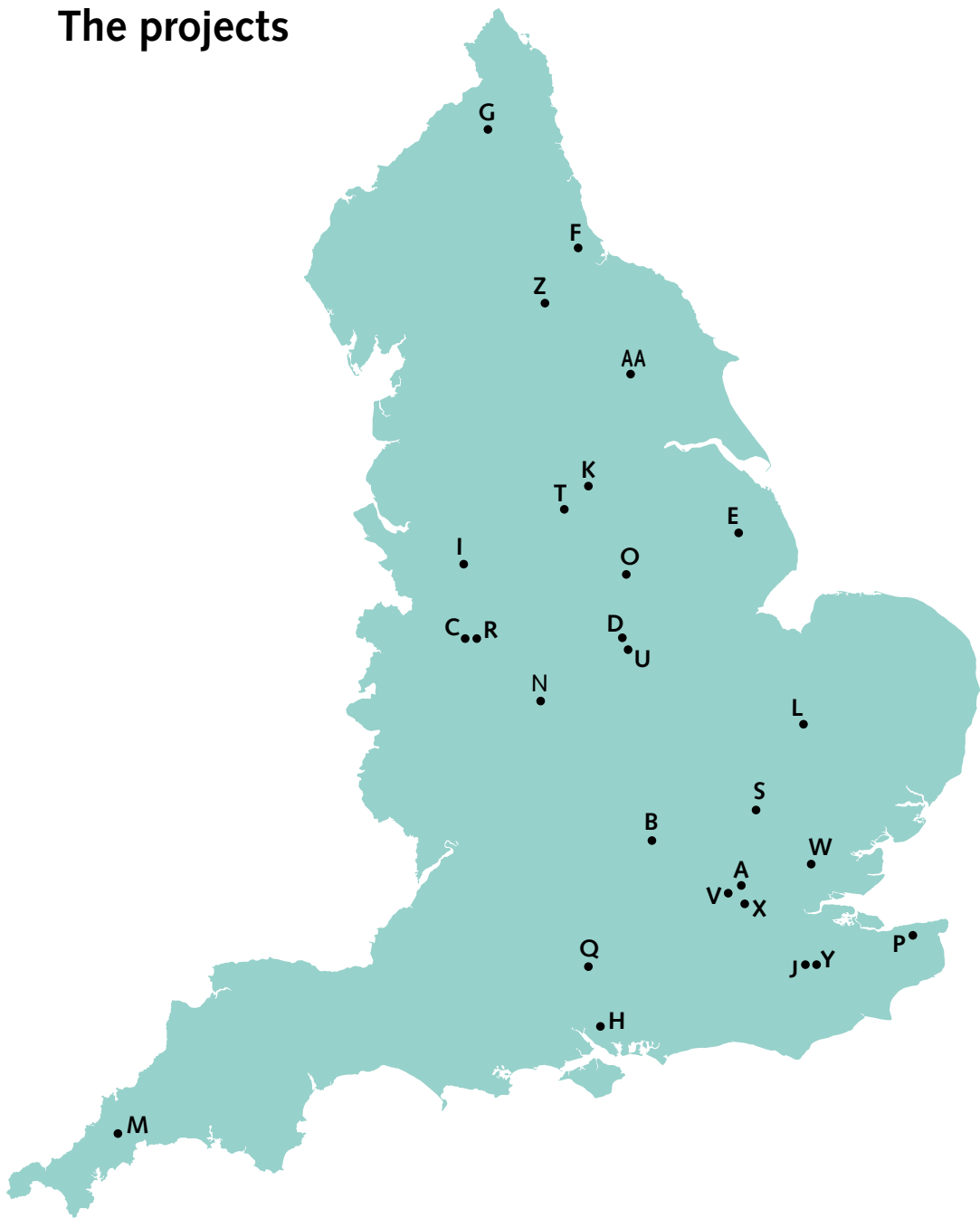
# The strategy

The project team recruited 100 AHP services and then selected 30 of them for further support: 13 adult services, 15 children's services and 2 services for both adults and children. Each service was offered a selection of service improvement tools and techniques to maximise local ownership:

- strong local leadership – agreeing plans, setting goals and using data to foster team commitment
- changes in the skills mix – providing better access and reducing costs by identifying roles for assistants
- building patient participation – ensuring that services receive clear feedback and patients are engaged in redesign
- knowledge-sharing – discussing best practice on a social network for AHPs
- better management information – taking advantage of new methods for capturing and using data to measure and own information at a local level
- self-referral processes – allowing patients to self-refer to improve speed of access to treatment
- planning tools – adopting the Model for Improvement and the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle
- measuring patient outcome – using tools such as validated Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) to negotiate and measure clinical outcomes.



# The projects



## Adult services

- A. Barnet Community Services**  
*Musculoskeletal physiotherapy service*
- B. Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust**  
*Physiotherapy service*
- C. Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust**  
*Physiotherapy service*
- D. Leicester University Hospitals**  
*Orthotics service*
- E. Lincolnshire Community Health**  
*Musculoskeletal physiotherapy service*
- F. North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust**  
*Adult therapy service*
- G. Northumberland NHS Care Trust**  
*Bathing assessment service*
- H. Solent Healthcare**  
*Musculoskeletal physiotherapy service*
- I. Warrington Community Services Unit**  
*Acquired brain injury service*
- J. West Kent Community Health**  
*Diabetic podiatry service*

## Children's services

- K. Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust**  
*Children's occupational therapy*
- L. Cambridgeshire Community Services**  
*Children's speech and language therapy service*
- M. Cornwall and Isles of Scilly NHS**  
*Children's wheelchair service*
- N. Coventry Community Health Service**  
*Children's occupational therapy service*

- O. Derby and Derbyshire Community Health Service**  
*Physical literacy service*
- P. East Kent Hospitals University**  
*Stroke service/Rehabilitation service*
- Q. Hampshire Community Health Care**  
*Children's therapy service*
- R. Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust**  
*Paediatric service*
- S. Hertfordshire Community Health Service**  
*Children's occupational therapy service*
- T. Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Community Healthcare**  
*Children's wheelchair service*
- U. Leicester City Community Health Service**  
*Children's speech and language therapy service*
- V. Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital**  
*Children's scoliosis service*
- W. South West Essex Community Services**  
*Childhood obesity service*
- X. University College London Hospitals**  
*Specialist tertiary adolescent chronic fatigue service*
- Y. West Kent Community Health**  
*Children's speech and language therapy service*

## Services for adults and children

- Z. County Durham and Darlington Community Health Service**  
*Therapy services*
- AA. North Yorkshire and York Community and Mental Health Service**  
*Wheelchair services*

# The outcomes

Services have undertaken quality and productivity improvements where:

- Patients are systematically consulted, for example patient groups identified access and self-referral as priorities for physiotherapy improvement
- Patient satisfaction is measured and used to inform service redesign, for example better access to wheelchairs and assessment closer to home
- Shorter waits improve patient safety, for example quicker transfer to community services from acute care
- Using a wider skills mix releases costs, for example training assistants to deliver some interventions releases £5,000 per week
- Redesigning the pathway improves access, for example patients have more routes into services using drop-ins and websites
- Engaging stakeholders reduces inappropriate referrals, for example improved access for high-risk diabetic patients.



# The learning

- AHP leaders enable teams, through partnership, to build a culture of continuous service improvement
- Attention to metrics at an early stage ensures that services demonstrate impact for their organisations and for commissioners
- Preparation of a project initiation document is valuable and keeps a focus on the improvements to be achieved
- The Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle is a clear and tangible planning tool for service improvement
- Whole systems change by AHPs, working across organisation and sector boundaries, improves quality and productivity
- Reporting and messaging with internal and external stakeholders are essential for maximising improvements.





# Useful links

**Department of Health,  
Chief Health Professions Officer**

[www.dh.gov.uk/chpo](http://www.dh.gov.uk/chpo)

**AHP Service Improvement Subgroup, CHAIN**

[http://chain.ulcc.ac.uk/chain/subgroup\\_resources.html#SIAHP](http://chain.ulcc.ac.uk/chain/subgroup_resources.html#SIAHP)

email: [enquiries@chain-network.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@chain-network.org.uk)

**NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement**

*Improvement leaders' guides*

[www.institute.nhs.uk/building\\_capability/building\\_improvement\\_capability/improvement\\_leaders'\\_guides:\\_introduction.html](http://www.institute.nhs.uk/building_capability/building_improvement_capability/improvement_leaders'_guides:_introduction.html)

*Demand and Capacity – Basic Concepts*

[www.institute.nhs.uk/quality\\_and\\_service\\_improvement\\_tools/quality\\_and\\_service\\_improvement\\_tools/demand\\_and\\_capacity\\_-\\_basic\\_concepts.html](http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_service_improvement_tools/quality_and_service_improvement_tools/demand_and_capacity_-_basic_concepts.html)

*The Productive Series*

[www.institute.nhs.uk/quality\\_and\\_value/productivity\\_series/the\\_productive\\_series.html](http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_value/productivity_series/the_productive_series.html)

*The Sustainability Model and Guide*

[www.institute.nhs.uk/sustainability\\_model/general/welcome\\_to\\_sustainability.html](http://www.institute.nhs.uk/sustainability_model/general/welcome_to_sustainability.html)