

Trying not to reinvent the wheel: Building an Evidence Repository to share grey literature

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The Problem

In the National Health Service (NHS), Public Health England (PHE) and Universities, staff perform evidence searches to inform decision-making. These documents are intended for internal use, but it is likely that another organisation could perform the same evidence search when looking at the same issue. This results in unnecessary duplication of effort across the health system, wasting time and money.

Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire STP and North Bristol Trust Library Services, supported by the West of England AHSN recognised the need for a portal to share grey literature. With their agreement, the aim was to develop an online Evidence Repository to share literature not published elsewhere.

Intervention

The repository was launched on the Future NHS Collaboration platform in May 2020, with access for NHS, University, and Public Health Organisations to upload documents in the following categories:

Evaluations

Evidence Summaries

Population Health Management

Insight Reports

Quality Improvement Projects

Strategy for Change



The repository was expedited as part of the COVID-19 response to enable information sharing. Teams working on evidence searches are supported to use the repository as part of their 'business as usual', and a video has been developed for promoting it. In response to requests, the repository has been expanded to include members from outside the West of England, and to include quality improvement and population health management projects.

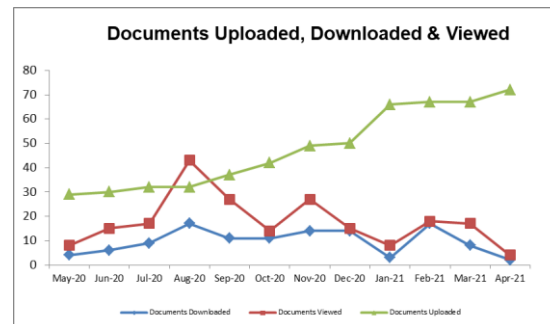
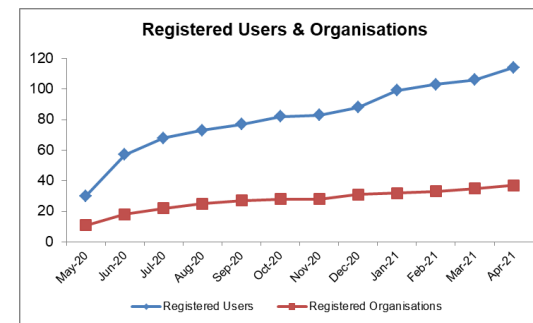
“Healthcare organisations are constantly seeking evidence to assist with decision making. Challenges encountered, and therefore questions asked, are frequently quite similar across different organisations. The repository allows sharing of information and has the potential to make better use of resources, as people can see what is already available before they duplicate efforts”

Professor Nicola Walsh, Professor of Knowledge Mobilisation & Musculoskeletal Health, The University of the West of England.

Effects of Changes

Since launching during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of documents and registered users has increased each month and there are now 72 documents uploaded, and 114 users from 37 organisations. There are consistent views and downloads each month, with a maximum of 43 and 17 respectively.

Measurement of Improvement



Lessons Learnt & Message for Readers

We have learnt that engagement is key to building a successful repository, and are working with organisations to make this part of routine practice, as well as QI teams and junior doctors to build QI content. **Our main message is for other UK organisations, particularly those with an interest in QI, to join us;** as more documents are uploaded, the value of the repository increases.