

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



## Our QI Strategy 2023-2025

**This document outlines our ambitions for QI and how and when we will enable delivery of this at SECAMB. This strategy is a working document and will be aligned with the revised Trust strategy when published in December 2023.**



# Introduction

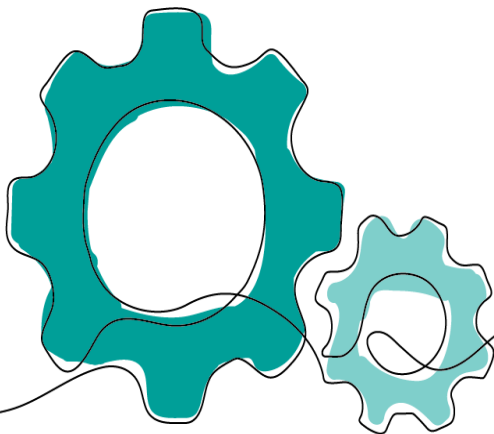
The strategic vision at SECamb depicts the importance of delivering high-quality care that is safe, appropriate for patients, financially sustainable, and integrated into the wider operational system.

To achieve our strategic goals, we are adopting a Quality Improvement (QI) approach. QI is a systematic and continuous process that aims to solve problems, enhance service delivery, and produce better outcomes for both patients and staff. We will embed and deliver this by following the guiding set of principles below.



## Why QI?

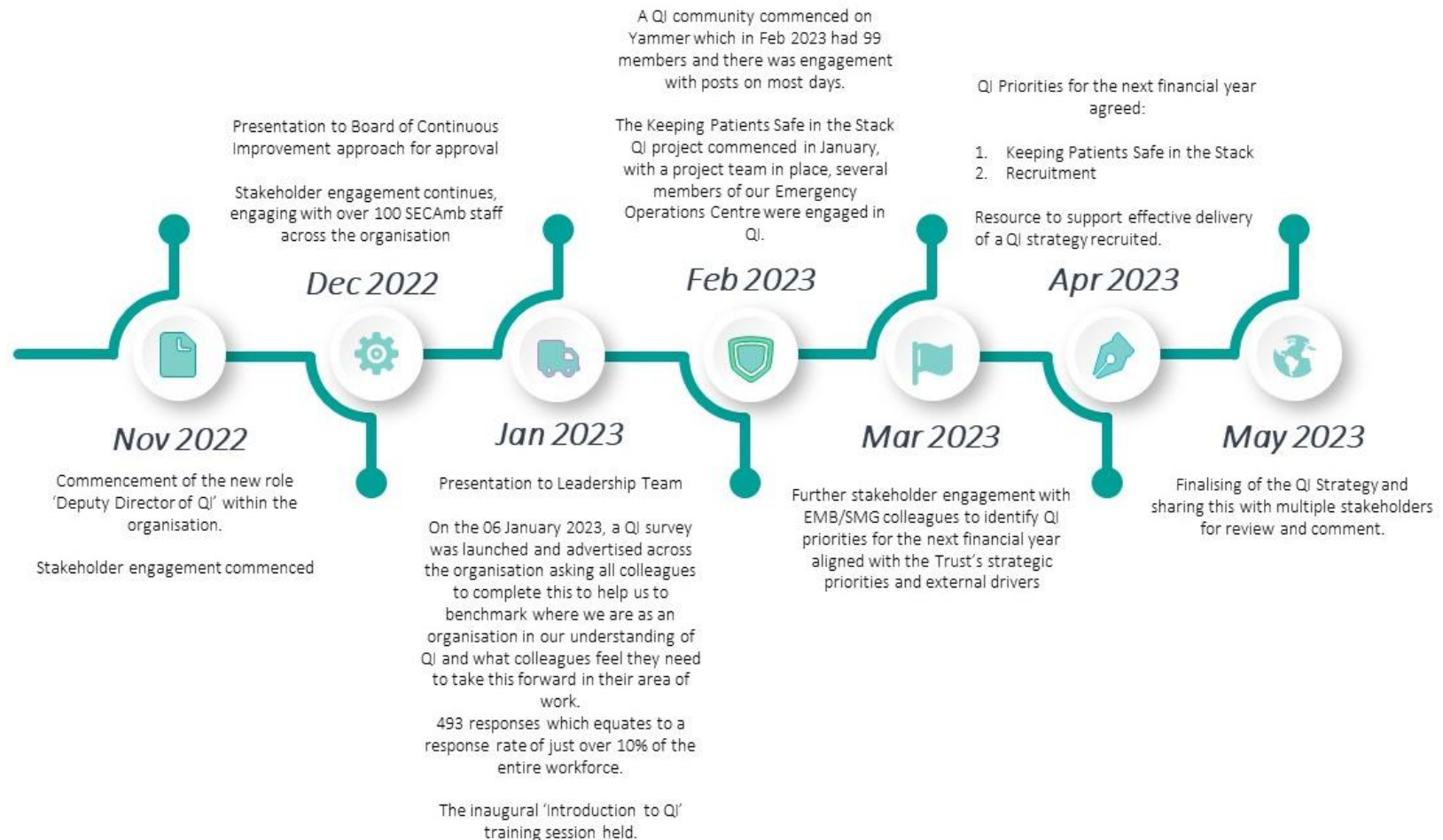
Research has shown that low-quality or substandard care can have a significant financial and human impact on the healthcare system. By incorporating QI, we aim to adopt a more proactive approach that focuses on preventing problems and issues rather than reacting to them. A QI approach provides a systematic and evidenced based framework that seeks to understand root causes. Achieving this requires an emphasis on cooperation and collaboration with engaged individuals who understand the context and can provide valuable insights to support problem resolution.



# Developing our QI Strategy

The development of this strategy has been led by the Quality Improvement team and co-designed through engagement and listening to a breadth of staff from all levels across the organisation.

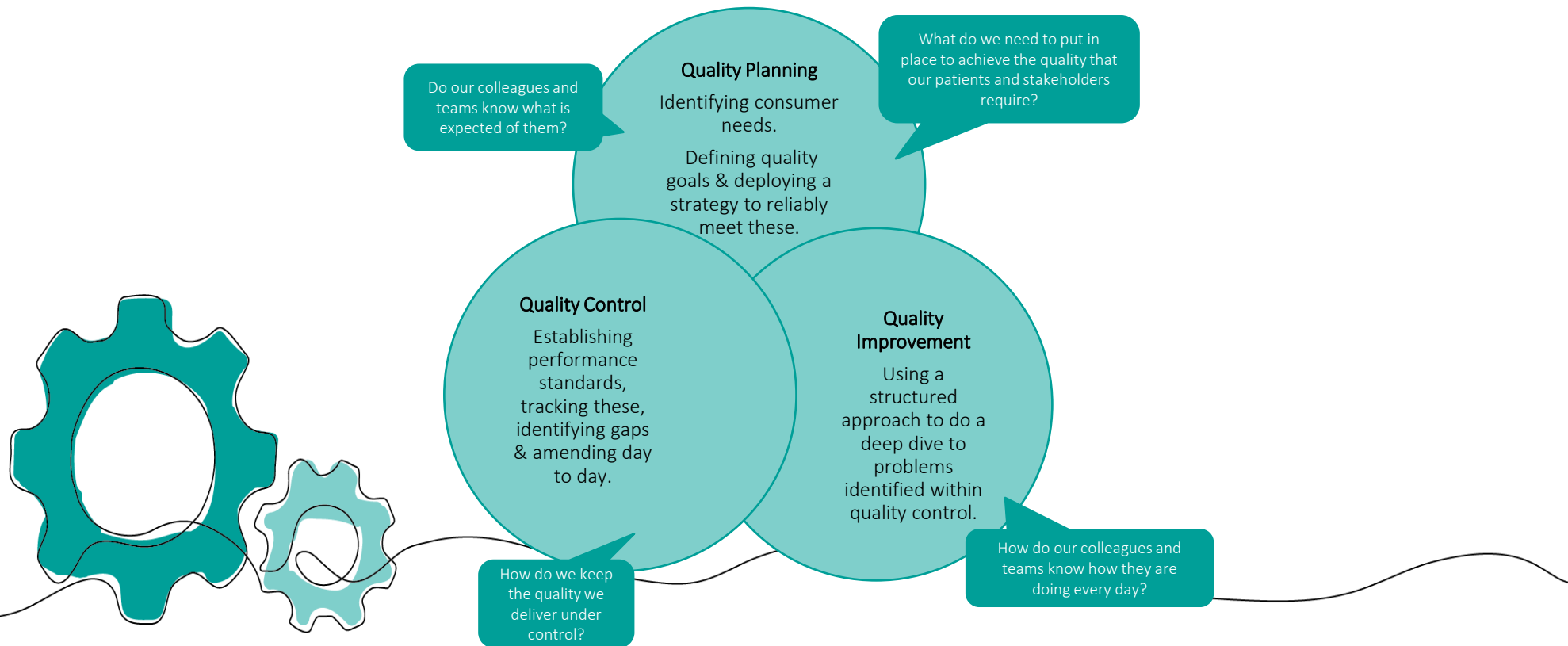
This has been a journey since the inception of a QI approach at SECamb in November 2022.



# Our Ambition

Our ambition is to develop and embed a QI approach across the Trust that aims to solve problems, improve service provision, and provide better outcomes for patients and our staff.

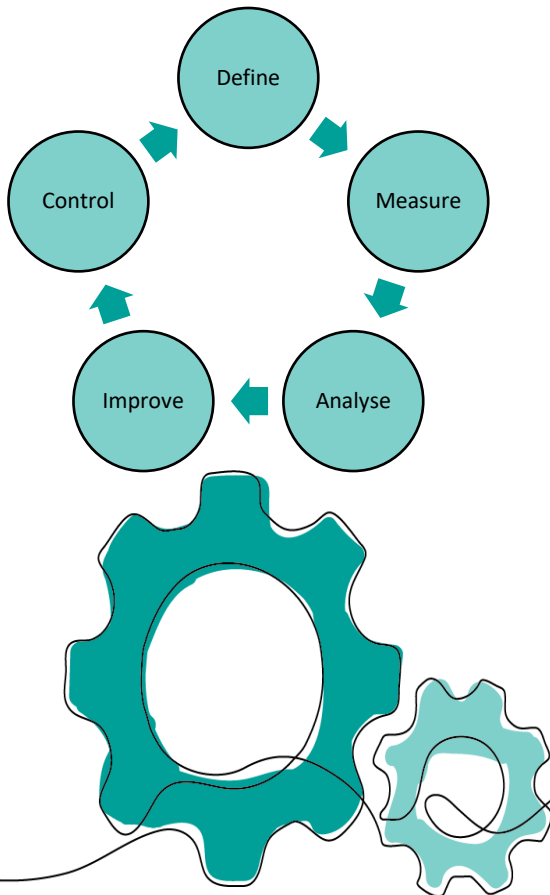
This involves a structured approach discussed on the next page to undertake a deep dive into problems or issues that are identified as part of a wider quality management system (QMS). A QMS is a whole organisation pursuit of quality that facilitates knowledge exchange and leadership principles to foster a culture of learning. It integrates a trilogy of quality activities; Quality Planning, Quality Control and Quality Improvement. The aspiration is to practice the principles of QI every day and at every level of the organisation utilising tools to support and enable this. We will be learning to think differently and approach challenges in a new way. QI will become second nature to all our teams and the way we do things.



# Our QI Framework

Our QI approach will be underpinned by a robust and evidence-based framework; DMAIC. DMAIC is an acronym for Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control and comes from Six Sigma methodology.

The DMAIC framework provides a structure for approaching and managing improvement to ensure all steps are taken and to maximise opportunity for success. Following the approach ensures that effective measurement is utilised, the root cause of problems is effectively addressed, and solutions are tested and embedded.



|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Define</b>  | We will describe the problem we are trying to solve and the value to the service/organisation if we do.  |
| <b>Measure</b> | We will understand the process which we are trying to measure and use data to understand how big or small the problem is. We will determine baseline data and set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time orientated) goals. |
| <b>Analyse</b> | We will think and analyse root causes and which contributory factors have most significance on our improvement.  |
| <b>Improve</b> | We will test the best solutions to resolve the root cause of the problems identified and confirm through small scale testing/pilots that these solutions will meet the objectives/goals.   |
| <b>Control</b> | We will fully implement solutions and establishing ongoing mechanisms to embed improvements and share our learning. We will consider human and system factors to ensure both positive and sustained improvements.                                |

# What will this mean for our patients, people and system partners?

By adopting a structured QI approach across the organisation, we aim to realise the following benefits for our patients, staff, and system partners.

## Our Patients will

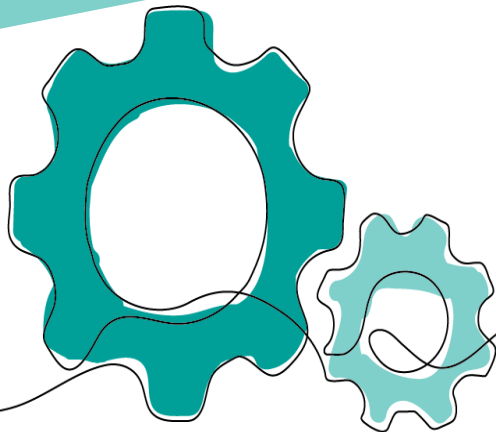
- Have improved outcomes
- Will know that we will identify problems earlier and that any changes to care are more likely to be positive and sustained
- Will be able to work in partnership with us to deliver the improvements that matter to them.

## Our People will

- Will be aware of and engaged in the systematic process we have for approaching complex problems
- Will feel enabled to actively engage in quality improvement within their roles
- Will have the required skills and competence to lead improvement in practice.

## System Partners

- Will see tangible improvements across care delivery ensuring that the organisation is as efficient and effective as it can be
- Will see SECamb actively engaging in effective improvement led delivery of system priorities.



# Where are we now?

Assessing contextual readiness is fundamental in preparing for transformation (Manley, 2019). Simply because we know an approach is well evidenced and the right thing to do, does not automatically translate into transformation in practice. Successful implementation is a careful synthesis of the nature of the evidence, the context in which the proposed transformation is taking place and how that transformation is facilitated (Kitson, 1998).

We know, because our people have told us, that our processes and ways of working can be inefficient, and this can have an impact on their ability to do their jobs well. As demonstrated below, our Board, senior leaders and managers across the organisation welcome a structured approach to improvement.

## Evidence

- There is significant evidence to suggest that adopting a QI approach and culture is required to implement meaningful change.
- A QI survey was launched to benchmark where we are as an organisation in our understanding of QI
- 10% of the workforce responded (493 people)
- Key issues identified stopping staff making improvements were:
  - Lack of organisational support
  - Workload
  - Organisational culture
  - Time.
- Key improvements identified to enable staff to utilise a QI approach to their work were:
  - Training and development
  - Support from a central team
  - Access to tools and templates.

## Context

- With the inception of a Quality Improvement team, we have an opportunity to understand and implement the skill set and required leadership to drive effective change.
- We have engaged 100 individuals, observed in EOC, undertaken an observer road shift.
- Our senior leaders and managers across the organisation are ready for change and welcome a structured approach to improvement.
- Some colleagues have already identified with improving as part of their role already (early adopters) and some need support.

## Facilitation

- QI is not something that just happens. It requires active participation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a skilled workforce (Gustavo, 2017).
- We need to apply methods where colleagues feel they can make significant contribution to the culture and processes at SECAMB.
- Colleagues need to be enabled to undertake improvement (capacity) and have the confidence, knowledge, and skills to lead improvement (capability).
- Alongside the foundation of QI capacity and capability there is a strong reliance on data.
- Without data, we are unable to understand variation, make decisions about whether situations are improving or deteriorating or understand how capable current processes are in delivering their aims and objectives.

# QI within Ambulance Trusts

Ambulance Trusts, as a sector, have not engaged with QI as successfully as other NHS Trusts. SECamb has attempted implementation of a QI approach previously and been unsuccessful in embedding this.

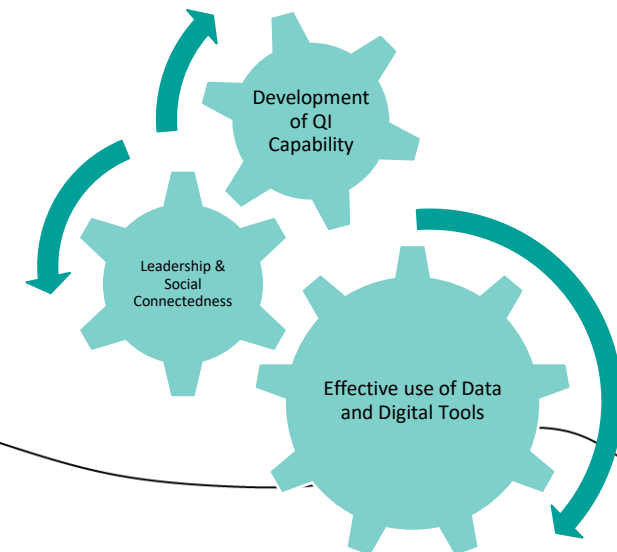
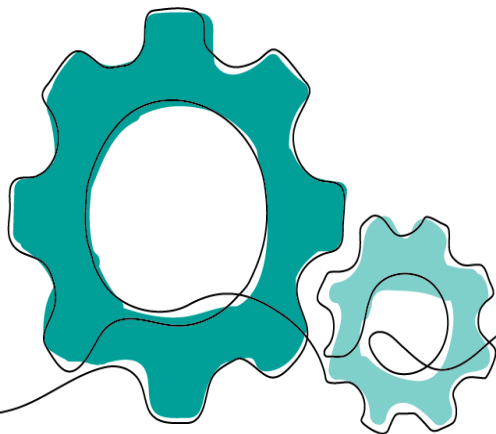
The process of embedding QI in an organisation is a social one. In support of this, in 2018, NHS England and Improvement and the Ambulance Improvement Programme (AIP) supported the development of the 'Culture and Leadership Network for Ambulance Services' (CALNAS) which is overseen by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executive (AACE). The areas of focus for CALNAS are a culture that promotes learning, a focus on QI, and leadership which is inclusive, compassionate, empowering, engaging and collaborative. This aligns with our Trust values at SECamb and our recently published People and Culture Strategy.

The structure provided through formal and informal professional relationships within ambulance services has historically adopted a military style hierarchy and delivery model designed to meet service demands (Pollock, 2013; Clompus & Albarran, 2016). This means that to enable success in QI we need to think about how to create a psychologically safe culture that supports our people to have a sense of control and influence over the improvements that they can deliver and how we support and trust them to do this.

We will achieve this through delivery of 3 key enablers:

- Development of QI Capability
- Leadership & Social Connectedness
- Effective use of Data and Digital Tool

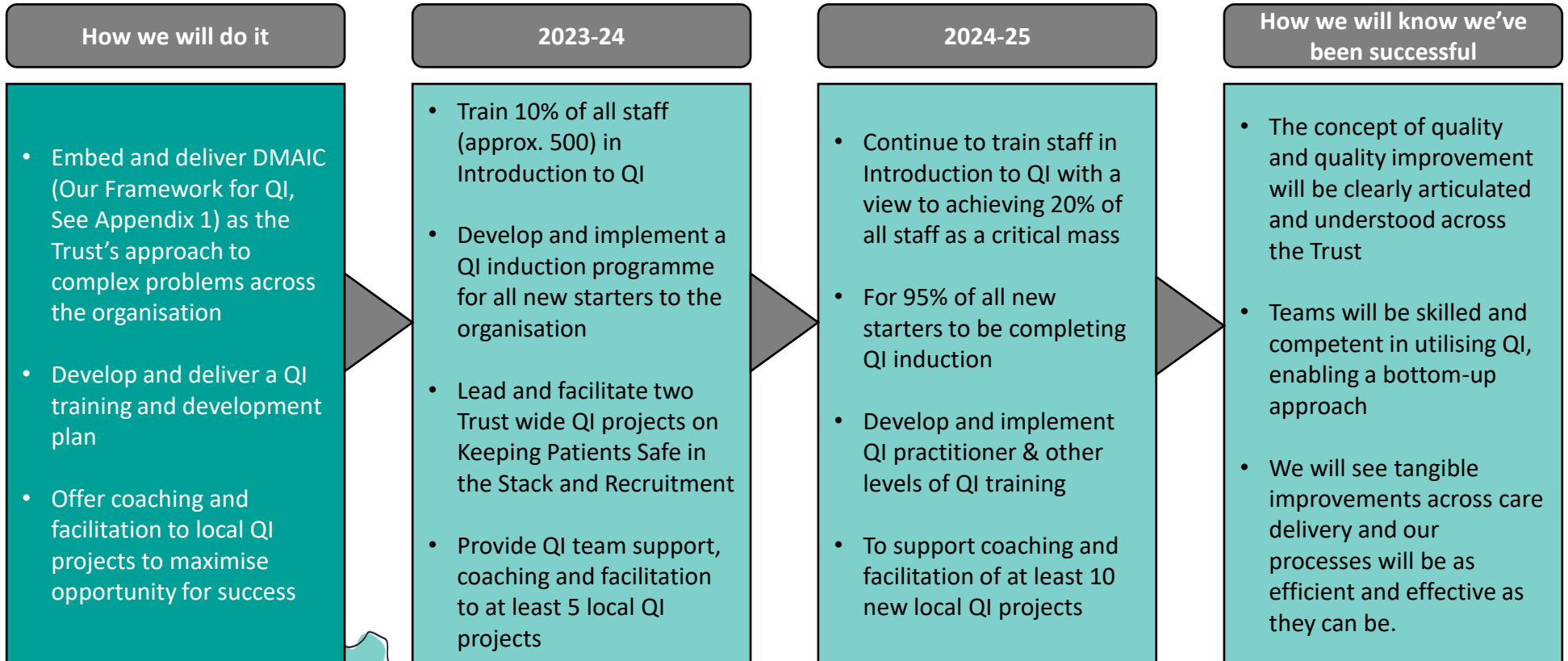
The delivery plan as to how this will be achieved is detailed on the next pages.





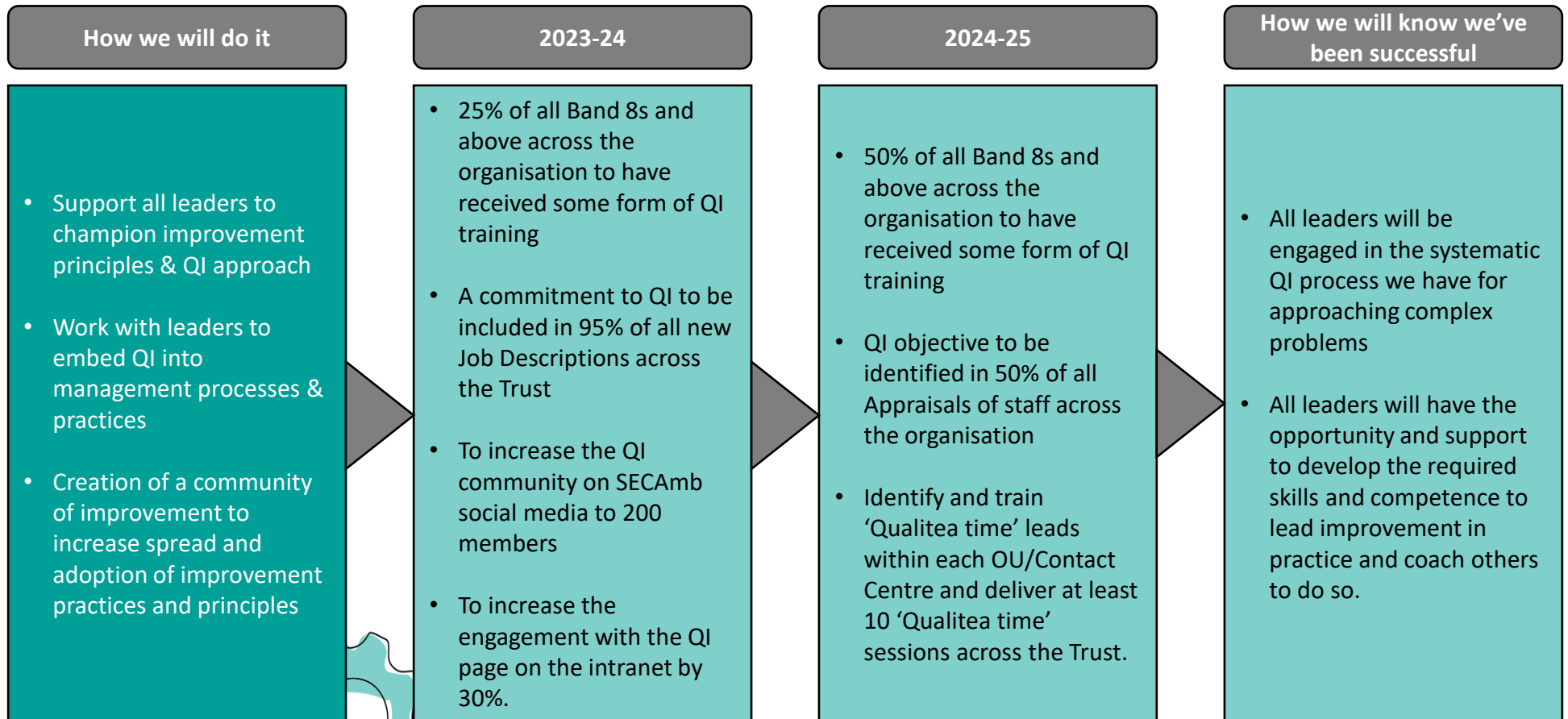
# Our delivery plan

## Enabler 1: Development of QI Capability



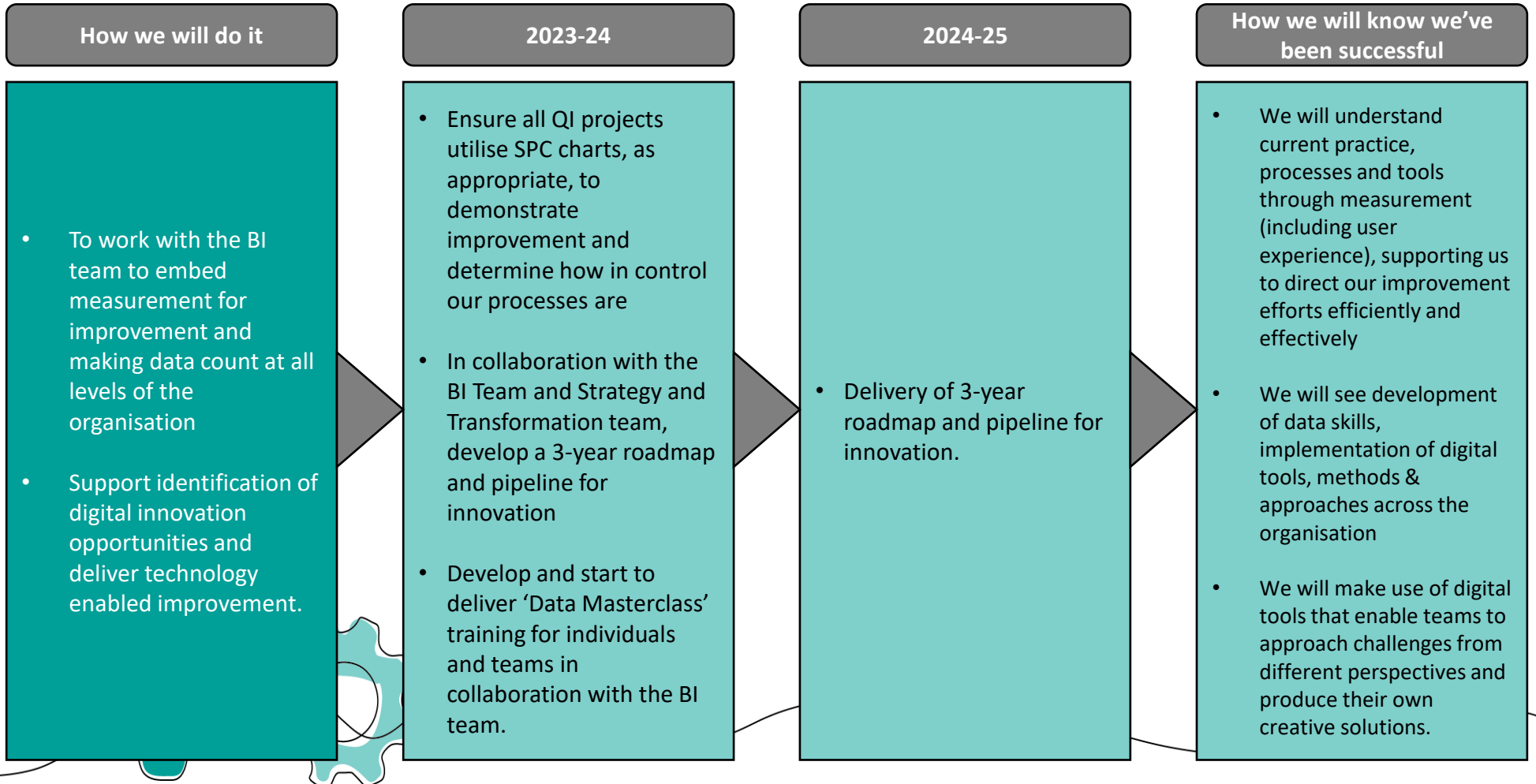
# Our delivery plan

## Enabler 2: Leadership & Social Connectedness



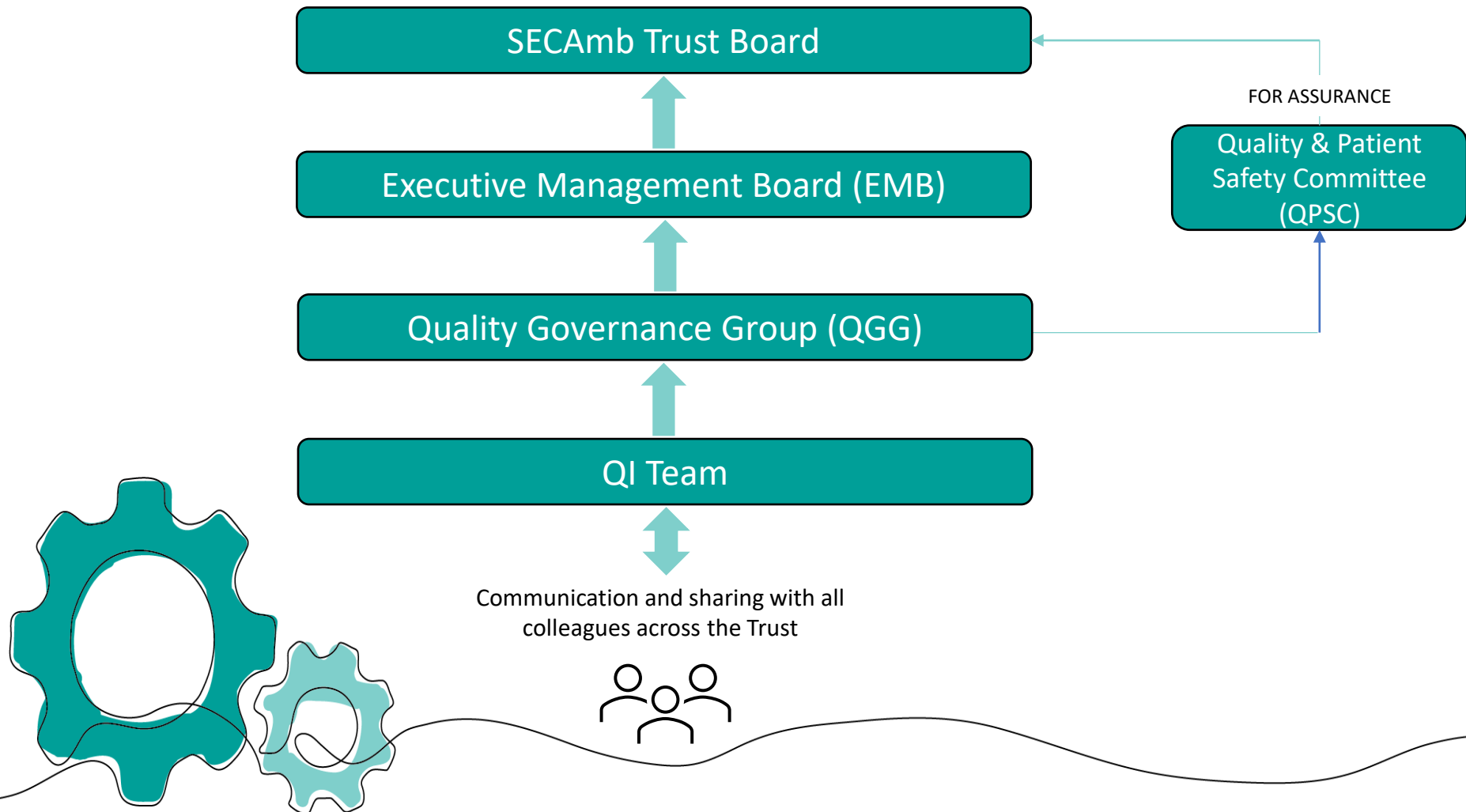
# Our delivery plan

## Enabler 3: Effective use of Data and Digital Tools



# How we will monitor and govern

The governance framework below details how assurance for the delivery of this strategy will be overseen. Quarterly reports on progress will be provided including details on the impact this strategy is having on our patients, staff and system partners.





We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy.

For more information, please contact the Quality Improvement Team at [quality.improvement@secamb.nhs.uk](mailto:quality.improvement@secamb.nhs.uk)

