

## Partnership with Vets for Pets

### **Making a difference everyday: Vets for Pets are adopting and applying evidence-based quality improvement methods in Veterinary Practice.**

In the ever-evolving field of veterinary care, one thing remains constant: the commitment to providing the highest standards of care for pets and their families. With that goal in mind, Vets for Pets, has teamed up with Quality Improvement Clinic and their QIClearn enterprise to launch a ground-breaking initiative that is transforming the way veterinary practices and support services approach quality improvement (QI). This collaboration marks a significant milestone in both organisations' ongoing efforts to promote safety, efficiency, and excellence in veterinary care.

At the helm of this initiative is Vets for Pets Quality Improvement Manager Dr Elly Russell. Elly is a small animal veterinary surgeon with over 15 years of clinical experience in first-opinion practice. Dr. Russell's impressive qualifications include a Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice and a PhD in communication and veterinary patient safety. Her expertise extends beyond clinical practice into the design and delivery of high-quality safer care training, where she has played a key role in developing and expanding the use of VetSafe, an adverse event reporting system aimed at enhancing patient safety.

Elly's passion for driving continuous improvement led her to explore how Quality Improvement (QI) principles could be disseminated throughout Vets for Pets, its practices, and the wider network of Pets stores. She sought to find a method that would resonate with people at all levels of the organisation, from veterinary surgeons to support staff. This is when she discovered the QIClearn programme, which she recognised as the perfect vehicle for promoting QI across Vets for Pets.

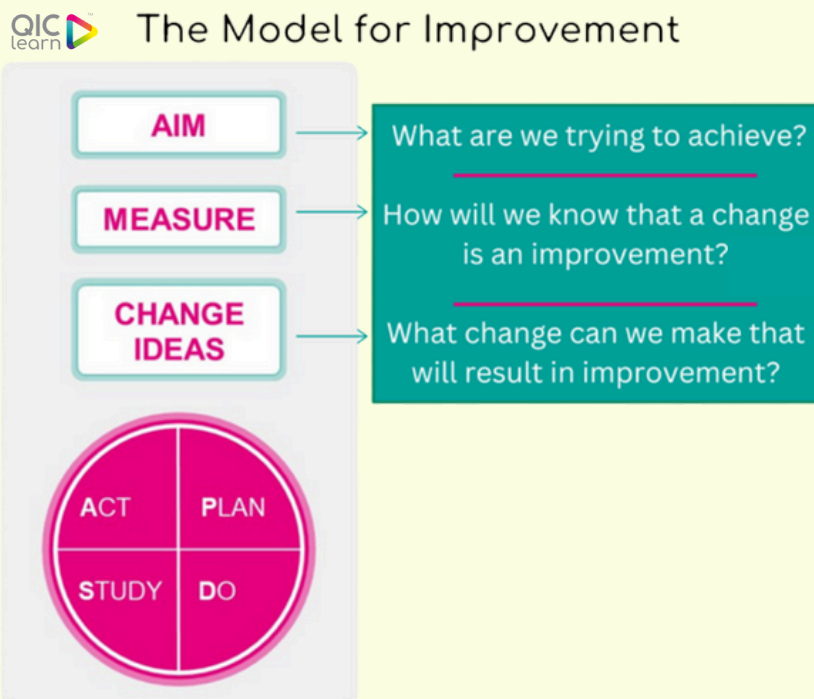
### **The Model for Improvement**

QIClearn's innovative approach centres on the principle of improving just "ONE small thing." This method encourages learners to focus on a single, manageable improvement idea, allowing them to develop, test, and refine it in real-time. Their courses are built around the Model for Improvement, popularised by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), a simple yet powerful change method that helps organisations accelerate the pace of improvement.

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The Model for Improvement comprises two key elements:

1. **Three Fundamental Questions**, which teams use to design their improvement.
2. **The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle**, a process that helps teams test and refine changes to ensure that they lead to the desired improvement.



The Model for Improvement, adapted from Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman & Provost (2009) The Improvement Guide. Jossey Bass.

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### **The Vets for Pets: QI Leaders Pathway**

Through the collaboration between Vets for Pets and QIClearn, the *Vets for Pets: QI Leaders Pathway* was born. This programme, based on QIClearn's popular *Improve ONE Thing: the Full QIP* course, was tailored specifically for those working in veterinary practices or support services. The curriculum is designed to provide veterinary professionals with the tools, knowledge, and strategies they need to lead quality improvement initiatives within their organisations.

The first cohort of the *QI Leaders Pathway* ran from October 2024 to March 2025, and the results have been fantastic. The learners in this first group have completed some outstanding QI projects, applying the principles they learnt to real-world challenges in their areas of work. These learners' experiences have not only contributed to the development of case studies but have also paved the way for future cohorts to benefit from their insights and progress.

Looking ahead, Vets for Pets hopes to harness the energy and expertise of these early QI leaders to mentor the next group of participants.

The programme will continue to evolve, with the next cohort set to start in June 2025, with 20 participants. Elly and the team at Vets for Pets are excited to welcome a new group of aspiring QI champions to the programme, offering them the opportunity to enhance their skills and make a meaningful impact in their areas of work.

