



The School for Change Agents:
Celebrating 9 years
of a social movement

find out more by visiting
horizonsnhs.com/school

HORIZONS

THE SCHOOL
FOR CHANGE
AGENTS

Introduction



Helen Bevan

Co-founder of the School for Change Agents and Strategic Advisor, NHS Horizons team.

I am delighted to introduce this review of The School for Change Agents (S4CA). The genesis of the school was two decades ago. When we started, we couldn't have imagined how many tens of thousands of people would have got involved and the impact it would have at an individual and organisational level.

Too often in the health and care system, we teach improvement skills, but we don't focus enough on building agency - the power and ability to make choices and act on them. That's where the School for Change Agents comes in; supporting change agents to build their change agency. The school is about helping people working in health and care and people with lived experience to feel they have the power, permission, skills and confidence to make change happen in their daily activities. Change efforts are far more likely to fail because of lack of agency, than because of lack of improvement skills, capability, resources or methodology. The school is about supporting people's hunger to improve with the individual and collective skills and courage to create tangible change at the point of care – making a real difference to people's lives.

Now, more than ever, with so many challenges in the health and care system, it is vital that everyone who wants to make a positive difference has the support and tools to do so. The School for Change Agents is our contribution and I am proud of what we have achieved so far. I am excited to see how the team and the school community develop in the future and the impact they continue to make.

Contents

About the School for Change Agents	2
Our impact	3
The story of The School for Change Agents	4
How does The School for work?	5
The School's national and global reach	6
Change agents' stories	7-9
The future of The School	10
How to get involved	11



Jackie Lynton

Founding Creator who sadly passed away in March 2018

This report is dedicated to Jackie Lynton, the first Head of Transformation for the Horizons team. Jackie sadly passed away in March 2018. She was a founder of both NHS Change Day and the School for Change Agents.

Jackie was a proud nurse and a leading proponent of an activist approach to improvement with 35 years' experience in the NHS and public services. She saw how thousands of frontline people were being mobilised to take action through NHS Change Day and wanted a channel to build skills so that NHS people leading change could incorporate their activism into their daily work. Jackie was also a global leader, spearheading the spread of NHS Change Day to 27 other countries and territories and supporting worldwide take up of the School for Change Agents offer.

Jackie was passionate that we harness the energy and creativity of people by working collectively, so that organisational and system change is possible and impactful. She believed we must inspire and give hope and belief, so collective action can make a practical difference. Jackie was way ahead of her time in her approach to change. Her legacy and contribution lives on, every day.

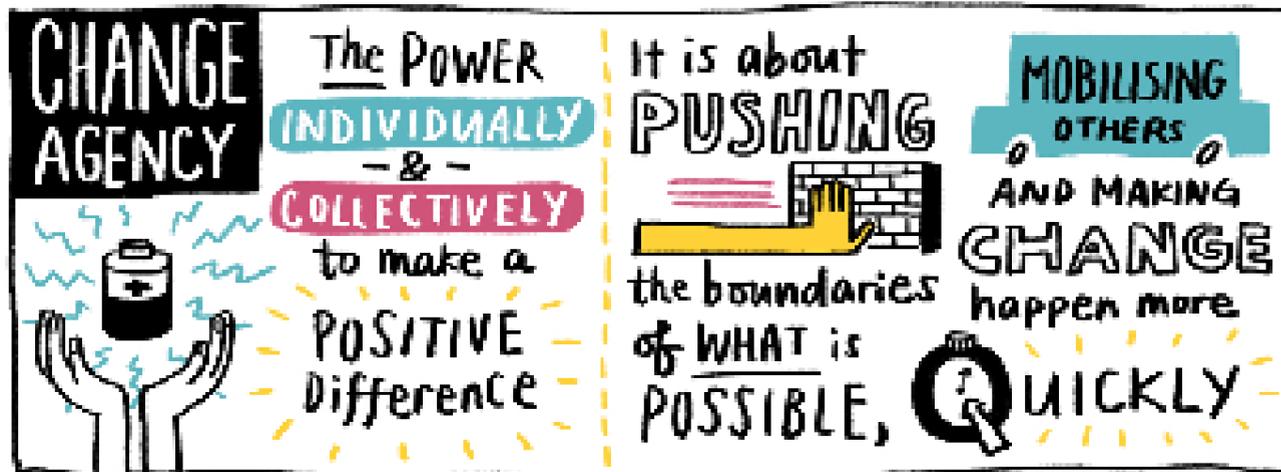
About the School for Change Agents

The Horizons team built the School to be inclusive and freely available to everyone. The main audience for the School is people working in health and care, across all levels and in clinical and non-clinical roles. The founding ethos is that power should be held by those at the point of care to mobilise a movement of change agents focused on making a difference.

People in Health and Care have never been busier; they need flexible development opportunities. Horizons have developed the School as a fully virtual offer, delivered on the FutureLearn platform. There are five interactive modules.

The School works by inspiring and equipping a critical mass of participants to become change agents. By creating a change agent mindset in Health and Care, the Horizons team are building the conditions for change to be welcomed, understood and embraced.

Participants describe how becoming a change agent equips them to make real improvements where they work, respond positively to organisational change and remain in difficult roles delivering an excellent patient experience.



For the School to be a social movement, it needs to be free to join, and for people to be able to access it wherever and however they want. Each run is unique as it draws on the collective input of the participants and creators. The only requirement is an internet connection. Content is regularly reviewed and updated and participants say that the quality of the articles, videos and research shared is a major strength of the School. It is also CPD accredited and completion certificates are available for those that want them.



Our impact

To create this celebration report, a selection of participants and creators were interviewed (3 of these can be found on pages 8, 9 and 10). A data review of previous evaluations and reports alongside current data, was also undertaken. This page is a thematic highlight of that work sharing key strengths of school. The pages that follow also showcase successes identified in both the interviews and data review.

"It's given me that understanding of how I need to approach change as opposed to shouting all the time. It's about talking with the right people and creating the right conversations."

"[School] has really helped at a point where I was not in a good place. I probably would have left if I hadn't done something about it."

Big and sustained engagement

School is a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC); each cohort has more than a thousand people signing up. Participants engage in different ways:

1 in 3 people who enrol complete some of the modules and up to 1 in 5 engage with all content

Thousands of people engage with the #S4CA community every month via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

Hundreds of thousands of people have accessed recordings of the live sessions and other online content

Every year, hundreds of people return to revisit content, participate again, and re-energise and renew skills.

Positive experiences and applied learning

"I just want to say thank you. I came across this course at a time when I really needed to hear positivity about change and give words to my beliefs about how change is achieved."

Most participants reported that they had applied what they had learned (60%) and shared it with other people (74%).

"It has taught me about bringing all of those different perspectives together and finding the common denominator in everyone's opinion, because there will be something that will be a thread through the middle of it. It's just how you swim through that and find it."

"Whereas now I have more confidence to voice those ideas and at least have people starting the conversation. Even if I can't drive that change, I'm at least starting the conversation, which for me is a winner."

"I love School for Change Agents because it's offered me a community, a network of people to talk to about change and innovation. And it's been able to change my mindset and give me the confidence to ask those difficult questions."

"What I have realised is that I need to raise my head up a little bit within the organisation, make connections with other people in other teams, and use them for support."

"The programme has definitely expanded my learning and I have personally had a few 'light bulb' moments while drawing on the presentations that have been included with the videos."

Individual and organisational development

A 2015 review of the programme by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development found positive impact at both individual and organisational level in the following:

Change knowledge

Sense of purpose and motivation to improve practice

Connecting with others to build support for change

Ability to challenge the status quo

Rocking the boat and staying in it

More than 96% of participants who answered our questions felt that School had met or exceeded their expectations, and that they had gained new knowledge or skills.



Our story

Era 1: Laying foundations for a social movement

Era 2 - The School for Health and Care Radicals

Era 3 - The School for Change Agents community

Era 4 - Massive Open Online Community

2004
The paper that started a social movement

The thinking that lay the foundations for The School for Healthcare Radicals

2007
Launch of the productive series change programme based on building agency alongside improvement efforts

2005
Helen Bevan and Paul Bates hosted the 'One Day School for Organisational Radicals'.

2010
Marshall Ganz and the team came to the UK to deliver training to NHS Leaders on community organising and social movement principles

2012
First ever The School for Healthcare Radicals!

2013
First NHS Change Day

2014
Nesta Awards Recognition

2014
Ground breaking paper published

2014
The refresh to 'School of Health and Care Radicals'

2017
Sketchnotes make their debut at the School

2017
Internal evaluation of the School

2017
School for Change Agents is born!

2015
Chartered Institute for Personnel & Development Evaluation

2018
The School now hosted on a learning platform

2018
Learning Technologies Awards finalist

2018
The School is CPD accredited

2019
First re-run of the School for USA audiences to support IHI

2019
The School partners with FutureLearn!

2021
NHS Fab Change Day

2021
The School returns!

2020
The School pauses as we all respond to the pandemic

2019
First re-run of the School for USA audiences to support IHI

2019
The School partners with FutureLearn!

2021
Podcast launched

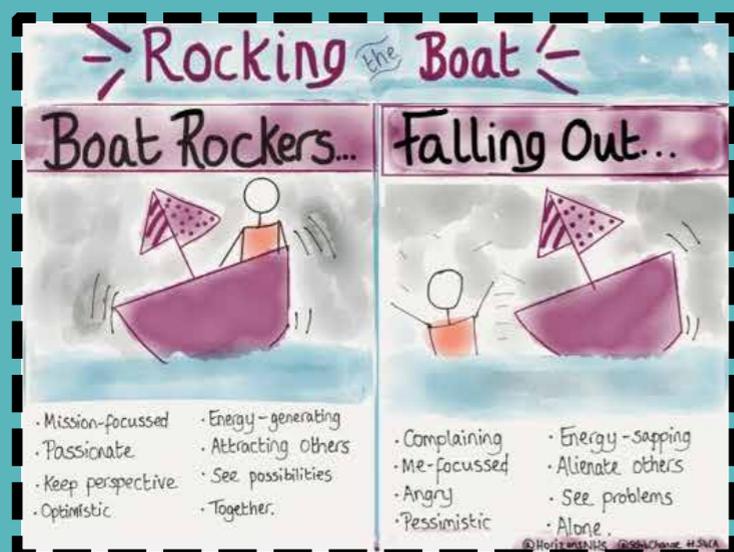
2022
The School continues to evolve and grow ...



Please click on each box to find out more details on the story of the School

How does the School create change agents?

Developing confidence and skills

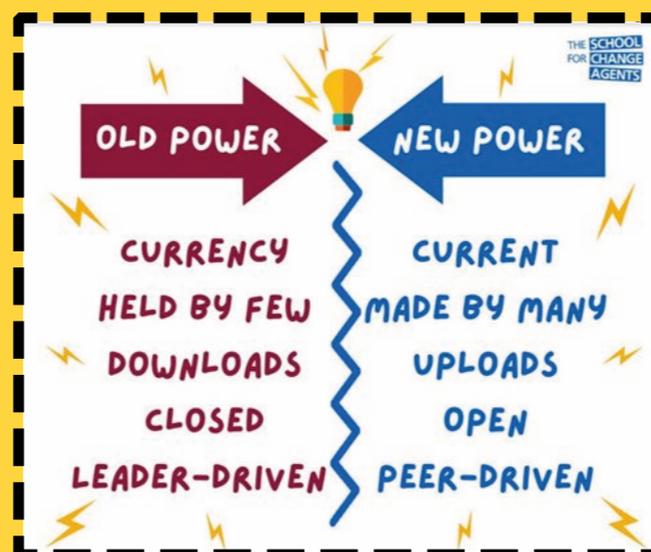


Participants tell us that they find the School fresh, exciting and inspiring; they love how it builds the confidence and skills to 'rock the boat', but with a focus on standing 'with' others rather than 'against' them.

The School encourages change agents to use and share their personal narratives, to formulate and be proud of their own change journeys.

Learners can access content and build skills flexibly, in ways that suit them, and people revisit the School and its resources several times to re-energise, and re-build and explore further reaches.

Leading and creating change

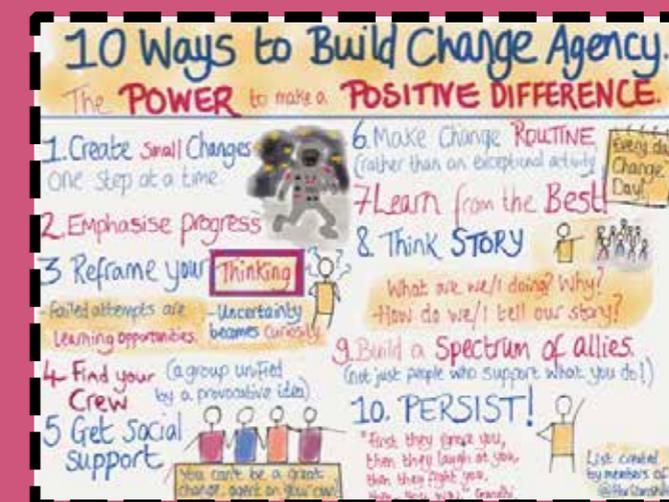


The School democratises change and encourages participants to build agency and be distributed leaders who deliver improvements.

Change agents describe having their passion to improve services ignited, as well as feeling they no longer need to seek permission to initiate change.

The School encourages participants to be inclusive when leading change and to listen to all voices when engaging people in change. There is also a focus on developing resilience and delivering sustainable change.

Connecting with the community



Communities don't just happen, that connection is built in every run of the School, using expertise, resources and a passion for supporting grass-roots change movements.

The Horizons team have harnessed technology to create a space for peers to share and learn. The School thrives on social media, where it connects and engages participants.

The community is energising and supportive - change agents describe finally finding their people and having their own team of cheerleaders.

The School's National and Global Reach

Since 2020, the School hashtag has had more than 18 million impressions on Twitter alone!



The School is open to everyone. Each run (or re-run) attracts **4,000 people** from all over the world; that's enough to fill the Royal Albert Hall! All that's needed is an internet connection and a desire to change things.



This year, each run has heard from **26 experts in their field** to inspire, motivate and bring theory to life. This year, change agents have been able to access **59 bite size sessions**, participants report returning year after year as the content keeps inspiring and motivating them. This year there were also **6 previous participants** who shared their experiences and learning.



We have designed the School in bite-sized chunks to promote engagement, independent learning and collaboration. All of our materials are open to everyone. We know that this is useful because over the last 5 years the School slides have been viewed more than **100,000 times** and recordings of live sessions have been watched **30,000 times**.



The School lives and thrives in the virtual world. Our social media platforms have been a key part of our success; we have more than **14,700 Twitter followers**, **1,800 Facebook members** and a growing Instagram community.



The School runs regularly and content is delivered virtually, meaning that change agents can participate asynchronously and access content when and where they like. Each cohort has more than **1,000 people** participating in online events.



Our inclusive approach means that we have change agents from all over the world. In the last few cohorts have had people join from **140 countries**.



The podcast 'Agents Assemble' has been a welcome addition to S4CA; there have been **8 episodes** in total and they've had over **600 listeners!**



The colour shows the global spread of countries where change agents have enrolled.

Joan Pons Laplana

Area Manager & Registered Nurse

Health Education England

 @RoaringNurse

When I undertook the School, I was a Community Nurse who was interested in making change happen but didn't know how.

Then I got an email asking me to join a movement, and that's the first time somebody told me, 'You are allowed to change things'. It transformed my life because I was suddenly involved in Quality Improvement.



"Before, whenever I tried to change

something, I found a lot of barriers.

With the School, I felt I now had permission"

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AGENTS



Click the image above to watch Joan's interview.

The School gave me power. It gave me a language to go to managers and show improvement through numbers. I knew our patients were happier but I was also able to say, "Look, because of the changes we have made, we have managed to see six more patients every week, and that means the waiting list has reduced."

The School showed me how to connect with people, create a movement and to engage with others so we could do it together.

My career was more or less going nowhere, but after I went to the School my career rocketed. Within 3 years, I won the British Journal of Nursing's 'Nurse of the Year' award. Since then, I have achieved things that I never thought possible when I landed in this country 21 years ago, with only my suitcase full of dreams.

Debbie Robinson

Diversity & Inclusion Lead

University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

 @debbiedee015

I've never been in the clinical world; I was an Admin Manager who was kind of a bit frustrated having to do things the way we've always done them and not really knowing how I could find a way to make some changes, to find a voice.

The School just looked like something really fresh and exciting. I felt like I'd found my people, actually - connecting with people who all understood that change is difficult, that it's a global issue.



"It was just so inspiring. Because I completed school it kick-started a whole change of career for me."

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Click the image above to watch Debbie's interview.

Who are we not hearing from? That's always my check now and that's what school taught me, to find those missing voices.

I learned that the best thing to do is to get some scrubs on and go sit in the area and observe, and listen and learn and talk to the people that were working there and find out what their ideas were.

Learning from other people, that's the thing. Sometimes you don't need to reinvent the wheel. And school just opened up a whole new world to me of contacts and people. I'm now using Twitter to connect with people and learn from others, and you can just share resources and ideas so quickly.

Dani Gillet

Nurse and Patient

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust

 @DaniG4_

I got a bit lost - I lost my passion, a lot of my power to want to move forward - and I swore I'd never be that nurse.

So, by redoing the School last year, it was recognition of that power in myself that I knew I could get through.



"If you've got something that's bothering you or you're not quite sure, just put it out on Twitter with the hashtag #S4CA and it's amazing the response that you get."

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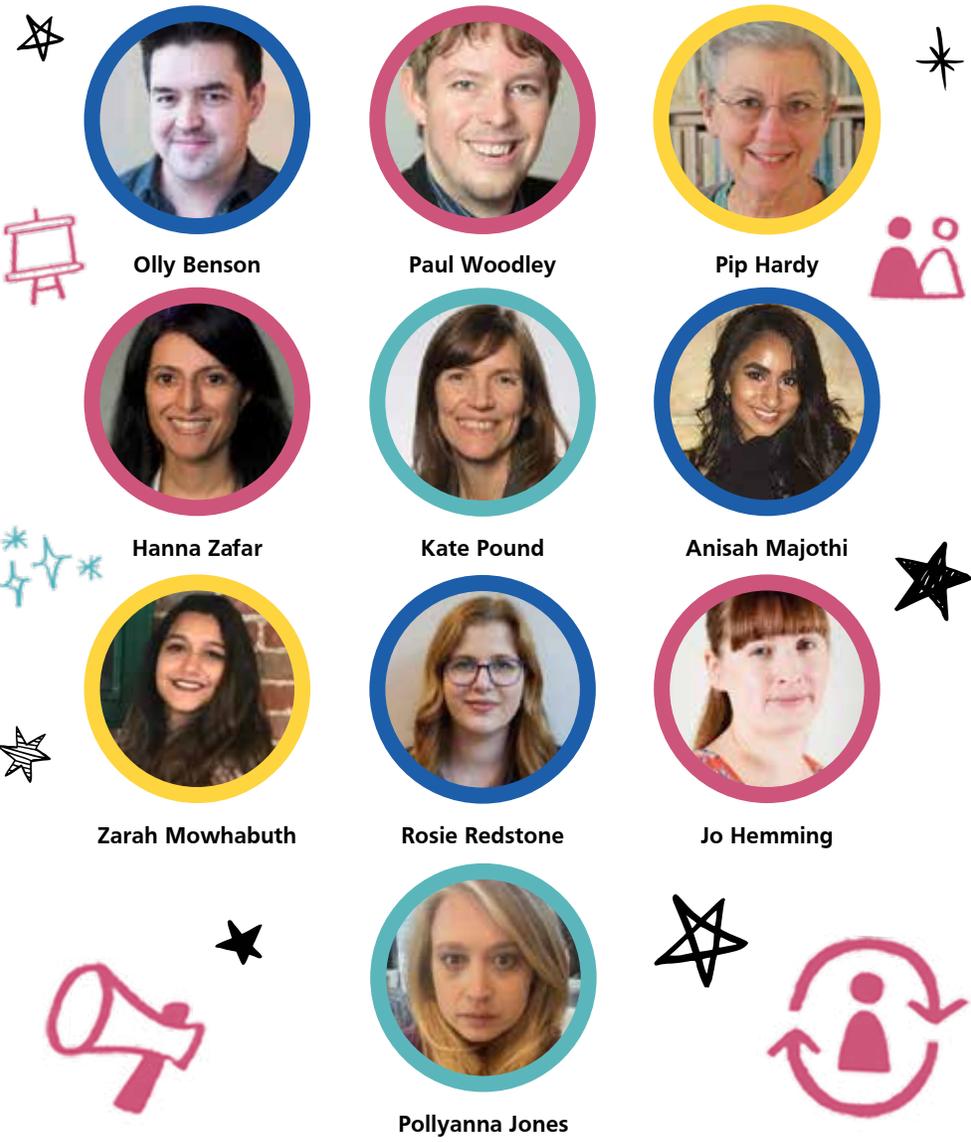


Click the image above to watch Dani's interview.

The School is about understanding those different leadership roles and how you can listen to each one and still get a satisfactory result ... It's important to just 'stand with people', and build relationships.

And that's the biggest thing that school changes - it's not a 'band' thing, it doesn't matter where you are in the spectrum of an organisation. If you've got power in yourself to be able to make those changes, you just need to find that one ally.

A lot of the time it does come back down to the evidence and that research. And with the School, they give you all of that. You're able to then go to somebody and say, here's my narrative, this is why I'm doing it, but actually this is why it works.



Olly Benson

Paul Woodley

Pip Hardy

Hanna Zafar

Kate Pound

Anisah Majothi

Zarah Mowhabuth

Rosie Redstone

Jo Hemming

Pollyanna Jones

Some of the people who helped to create the School

The people above are just some of the amazing contributors who helped make the School the success it is today. We aren't able to showcase them all here but they know who they are and we will always be amazingly grateful to them.

The current creators

Tell us what you love about The School for Change Agents ...

I enjoy seeing the theories of change come alive. The lightbulb moments that happen with participants in the first module - the realisation that yes, they do have power to make change happen, and that they are not alone.

The community is my favourite thing about the School - participants are so generous with their experiences and reflections and I learn as much as they do from the School.

Leigh Kendall



I loved learning from experts such as Esther Murray about moral injury, hearing about the 'pirate life' from Alex Barker and listening to the amazing, captivating stories of Mo and Benash Nazmeen. It was and is a real privilege for people to share their story with us, in the hope to inspire others.

The School is a unique community and a safe space to learn together. It's a space for all, filled with community spirit and sharing and it brings me a lot of joy to see how much the school has helped people become change agents.

Kerry McGinty



Why The School for Change Agents matters to the NHS

Now, more than ever, we need communities that help us to make sense of our experiences as people in the NHS, people who use health and care services and their unpaid carers.

The School for Change Agents is a precious space for evidence based learning on how to change the world, whether at-scale or in small but important ways. As we continue to grapple with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, I'm proud of the role that the School will play to support and inspire "change agents" around the world.

Kathryn Perera
 Director of NHS Horizons and Programme Director for The School for Change Agents

"It has inspired and encouraged me not to give up on New Power strategies that are dear to my heart when at times it seems that the Old Power strategies are dominant. Thank you."

"This has been inspirational and thought-provoking course. Learnt a lot and great links to continue the reading and learning."

How to get involved

Join the next cohort of the School

Listen to the podcast

Join and share your improvements with the online community the online community



Encourage your peers, teams, services and organisations to become agents too

Tell us your change agent story

"Really enjoyed school. I have learnt more about myself in this journey, so thank you."

"I love the way everything is bite-sized, perfect for slotting in whilst waiting for a virtual meeting to start or when you've just got 10 minutes to spare and don't want to commit to a big task."



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AGENTS