

Making a Difference Hall of Fame

Changing handover habits

New ways of carrying out ward handovers improved the service user experience, increased staff confidence and promoted efficient working



The Challenge

Lime ward at Callington Road Hospital is a busy place and maintaining good communication to ensure service user and staff safety is a constant challenge.

Traditional oral handovers took up to ninety minutes every day taking staff away from the ward area. Handover was failing to fulfil its communication function, staff felt dissatisfied and unable to contribute, definitive decisions were not being made and details were missed. Supplementary handovers were required.

In addition, service users were not involved in handovers and as such they did not enhance recovery.

When an investigation found that handover had been a contributory factor in a serious problem Lime Ward management team determined that things had to change.

What we did

The management team tried out a number of different handover methods without success.

Whilst attending a 'productive ward' training session, team members heard how changes to handover in a general hospital had been successful and were inspired to make changes. They took time to plan, think about what improvements they wanted to make and how they were going to measure them. Before introducing the new handover approach the team took baseline measurements so they could show what difference the new approach had made.

The new handover involves a short thirty minute handover away from the ward during which the morning shift co-ordinator uses an updated list to handover safety information to the afternoon shift.

Key learning

- Productive ward gave the structure required to make change
- A steering group kept the process moving, ensured standards were high and helped engage team members
- Planning time in advance of change was essential
- Evaluating and using measures before and after illustrated what had been achieved
- Challenges to entrenched ward culture can be successfully overcome when evidence for change and effectiveness can be provided
- Small changes can have wide reaching effects- especially to enhancing recovery focused care

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Following the group handover, individual handovers take place with each service user. Personal handovers involve the service user, their key worker from the morning shift and allocated worker for the afternoon shift. The time is used to discuss what happened during the morning and review their care plan for the rest of the day.

This handover is conducted wherever the service user wishes, in an interview room or in their bedroom.

Planned activities and tasks are then recorded on the office board so the shift co-ordinator knows what needs to be done and where people are.

Who was involved

Jaci Bennett	Ward Manager
Jenni Powell	Band 6 RMN
Emma Crafer	Band 5 RMN
Nic Scott	Band 3 HCA

What difference did it make

Service users and staff took time to become accustomed to the new approach but now fully support it.

There are up-to-date care plans in all service users' rooms, which have been regularly reviewed by staff and service users. Service users' report they feel more cared for and have improved discussions about their needs in addition to scheduled one-to-one sessions.

"Handover is very good in the bedrooms. I feel that the staff listen to me and it feels a more personal" "I feel heard"

Respondents in the staff evaluation describe feeling more confident - knowing exactly what they have to do. They welcome greater accountability as they keep agreements made directly with service users. They also report having greater insight into the mental state of the individual by entering their room, using all their senses to evaluate service user needs. Face-to-face discussions become increasingly candid and enhance active change.

"I like the idea that the service user is involved in the hand over and a summary of their care happens on a daily basis. The new hand over will help reinforce what has been agreed. It also helps to get important information back to me on a daily basis. I can then act on it ...fast." Dr Suzanne Wille

Further proof that the new approach works includes a reduction in the number of episodes of service users 'absent without leave'; reduced handover time; PALS report increased praise and reduced concerns; more one-to-one sessions; increased admissions and reduced length of stay reduced.

Feedback from allied services suggests that communication is improved beyond the team, with less delays or repetition of requests.

The difference to service users and staff has been enormous.

Contact

For more information please contact

Jaci Bennett

Jaci.Bennett@awp.nhs.uk