

'BEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE NHS IN YEARS': THE EALING STORY

The NHS over the years has been developing methodologies and processes which enhance the quality of health care by improving flow in the patient journey and eliminating waste. Waste is anything other than the minimum amount of equipment, space, staff time, which are essential to add value to the product or service. A concept that has been developed from the Toyota Productive System is **Lean Thinking**. There are many successful competitive companies in the world that have adopted this concept and more recently this thinking is increasingly being applied to health services in the UK.

Following a period of intensive testing and development with a number of acute trusts in England, the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement has now launched a series of modules that enable ward staff to increase the time spent on direct patient care. The principles behind these modules is based on Lean Thinking. One of the Modules that NHS Ealing have adopted is *Releasing Time to Care* -The Productive Ward. This module focuses on improving ward processes and environments to help nurses and therapists spend more time on patient care thereby improving safety and efficiency.

NHS Ealing Learning and Development strongly support the principles of Lean Thinking and how it's processes can be adopted in order to provide a higher quality of health care for the patient's of Ealing. In the last couple of years NHS Ealing has applied the principles of Lean Thinking through programmes such as the Productive Leader and Lean Thinking in Business Improvement Techniques.

The Productive Ward module has been embraced by NHS Ealing and many of the benefits below are now being realised, improving patient and staff satisfaction.

The overall benefits that can be achieved by delivering through the module are;

- Gives nurses back 10 per cent of their time to spend on patient care
- Creates calmer wards and reduces patient complaints
- Increases safety (shown in observation reliability scores)
- Increases morale
- Breaks down barriers between front line staff and managers, and between disciplines.

NHS Ealing was part of an accelerated package which included training for 10 staff, 3 facilitation visits from a Productive Ward facilitator and an executive brief. The programmes were implemented at two sites, Clayponds Hospital and Meadow House Hospice since June 2008

In December 2008 Clayponds Hospital was awarded Productive Ward winners by the Lean Healthcare Academy (in conjunction with the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement). At the hospital the areas that showcased The Productive Ward were three units: admission avoidance, neurology and rehabilitation. As part of the process wards were required to carry out baseline assessments on up to 11 Key Performance Indicators. The ultimate aim of the Productive Ward/Community Ward management strategy is to ensure high quality care, patient safety, improved patient satisfaction and improved patient flow.

Julie Belton, Service Head for Practice Development and Productive Project Lead, explains the progress made to date.

Early in the summer of 2008 and as part of the package of support from the NHS Institute, the Project Facilitator and Lead completed two days of project management training before embarking on the module implementation programme with the wards.

The first module to be completed was the “The Knowing How We Are Doing” module which helps form a performance baseline against a range of indicators, clarify areas and actions for improvement and identify project champions. This was also the opportunity for each of the ward teams, the patients and relatives to create a vision that reflected the care package they wanted to see provided on their unit.

The next module completed was the “Well Organised Ward”, the staff used the module process to go in to those physical areas previously identified as in need of standardisation, such as the sluice room, and using techniques like 'spaghetti walk', mapping and 5S, they rationalised and reorganised the space.

More recent key process module work has given a focus to patient observations - making sure it is done at the right time, that readings out of normal limits are reported, etc - and is now going on to consider how mealtimes can be best organised to meet the needs of the patients.

Improvements already recognised have been identified in higher levels of patient satisfaction, direct care times and a reduction of time spent in motion (looking, returning, walking and searching).

The next stage of this programme will see the nursing teams take themselves through the rest of the modules to achieve the overall benefits highlighted above.

Following the success of the programme within the show case areas, the productive team are in the process of rolling out this programme to three new areas, Southall District Nursing, PPI and PALs and Acute Rehabilitation Services with further roll outs expected later on in the year.

Further information about this programme, please click on the link below;

www.institute.nhs.uk/productiveward

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