Embedding an improvement culture across NHS Wales

Over 12,000 staff in NHS Wales have completed the ‘Bronze’ level of Improving Quality Together (IQT), the national quality improvement learning programme run in NHS Wales. Staff are using the knowledge gained on hundreds of improvement projects designed to make care safer and improve patient outcomes and experience.

So far, NHS Wales staff are applying the knowledge and skills gained through IQT to improve nursing care, reduce the risk of infections, protect against inappropriate prescribing, improve hospital cleanliness, and streamline administration processes.

“Improving Quality Together is enabling frontline clinical staff, administrators, contractors, management and Board members to improve the care delivered to patients,” says Dominique Bird, programme manager for IQT.

“IQT is becoming a common language of improvement right across organisations. Staff are better equipped to work together towards improved patient experience and outcomes.”

“IQT gives everyone working in NHS Wales the power and tools to improve patient care. Through IQT, every member of staff can make small changes that add up to huge improvements in the care that people receive. There are good ideas being applied in every NHS Wales organisation and it’s encouraging to see so many staff using IQT because they want to offer the best service possible to the people who need care.”

Examples of improvement

Staff who have completed the IQT Silver level are introducing new ways of working across multiple clinical areas in NHS Wales organisations. So far projects have...

- Ensured patients in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board receive the correct dosages of drugs to treat asthma and other respiratory problems.
- Reduced delays and improved communication on hospital wards in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board.
- Eliminated the waiting list for dental treatment in HM Prison Cardiff.
- Stopped ward staff being interrupted, increasing efficiency and resulting in better patient care.
- Reduced unnecessary hospital admissions and offered care closer to frail elderly patients’ homes after ambulances are called.
- Improved mouth care to prevent gum disease and other discomfort for in-patients in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.
- Shortened the time it takes to get volunteer members of the public trained to take part in important research.
- Protected patients from potentially harmful infections by ensuring operating theatres meet cleanliness standards.
- Enabled General Practices to proactively identify and support carers of elderly or chronically ill people.

Spotlight on Wales

- Wales is part of the UK and has a population of just over three million people.
- Wales is governed by the Welsh Government, which is based in Cardiff, the capital.
- The country has two official languages: Welsh and English. Welsh is the oldest European language still in everyday use. All official documents are produced in both languages.
- The founder of the UK’s National Health Service, Aneurin Bevan, was Welsh.
- Healthcare is delivered by NHS Wales through seven fully integrated health boards. Specialist services are delivered through three national trusts (Public Health Wales, the Welsh Ambulance Service and Velindre NHS Trust, including Velindre Cancer Centre).
- Over 70,000 people work for NHS Wales.

The priorities for NHS Wales

NHS Wales Chief Executives have identified four main priority areas for 1000 Lives Improvement to support: Planned Care, Unscheduled Care, Population Health and Preventing Harm. Turn over to pages 2 and 3 to find out how we are supporting work in all four of these areas.

Gaining Bronze, Stepping up to Silver and Leading through Gold

There are three levels in Improving Quality Together. Staff complete the Bronze level through a series of online modules, before moving up to the Silver level, which provides an opportunity to develop and implement improvement projects. The Gold level is a network of improvement coaches based in NHS Wales organisations that support staff who are making improvements. There is also additional training for board members.
Making sure that ‘planned care’ happens according to plan

Many healthcare procedures and treatments are not emergencies. Surgery, such as knee replacements, or treatment for chronic conditions such as diabetes, can be planned. 1000 Lives Improvement is supporting NHS Wales to deliver the best care in partnership with the people who rely on the service.

Reducing waiting times for psychological therapies

1000 Lives Improvement has worked with service users and clinical staff in two health boards to address issues with waiting times for psychological services.

The event involved staff from Powys Teaching Health Board and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and people who had either been on the waiting list or were currently waiting to see a specialist. Friends and family members of service users were also invited, along with people from third sector organisations and local government staff.

The event used a ‘strengths’ based co-production approach recognising the experience that people who have waited or are waiting brought to the event. It addressed the existing arrangements for service provision and communication with service recipients.

Participants gave very positive feedback from participants and a rich mix of views were gathered addressing the adoption of new approaches and enhancing public awareness of services already available – both of which are likely to reduce waiting times. There were also practical suggestions for how communication could be improved for those who have to wait for therapy.

Putting people at the centre of care

1000 Lives Improvement offers support to NHS Wales and partner organisations to enable them to deliver care that is fully person centred and:  
1. Affords people dignity, compassion and respect.
2. Offers coordinated care, support or treatment.
3. Offers personalised care, support or treatment.
4. Offers support in building resilience and interdependence to tackle the determinants of health at source, to build on the wellbeing agenda and prevent people from entering the health system.
5. Supports people to recognise and develop their own strengths and abilities to enable them to live an independent and fulfilling life.

Person centred care is being delivered through shared decision-making, co-production approaches, supported self-management and partnership working between organisations.

Ensuring people receive effective and timely care when they most need it

Unscheduled care is an area of health service provision that is often in the news, particularly issues of demand on Accident & Emergency services. 1000 Lives Improvement is involved in work to alleviate pressure on A&E services, and improve patient experience and outcomes.

Getting the ‘Flow’ right through the care system

The Patient Flow Programme was launched in December 2013, focusing on access to hospital emergency services. 1000 Lives Improvement runs workshops, improvement science training and coaching to clinical teams working on improving flow in unscheduled care.

The Patient Flow Programme is now widening its scope to support improvement across the whole patient pathway including primary care intermediate and social care. This will include concentrating on better flow and pathways for frail elderly patients, bringing together all aspects of health care and social care to start a conversation on ‘getting care right first time’, and improving communication and cross-sector working with social care.

Flow progress in Wales

- Improving radiology and pathology processes to reduce time taken to get results.
- Discharging patients before 11am or midday where possible.
- Reconfiguring types of ‘bed’ available, including increasing short stay surgery beds and using a ‘live’ bed management system.
- Sourcing alternatives to hospital admission, for example, using community hospitals.
- Improved links with nursing and residential homes to help people leave hospital more quickly.
- Analysing readmission rates, aiming for reduction.

Wales’ youngest A&E consultant advises people on where to seek help

Many of the people who come to A&E would find it more useful to use other services, such as the emergency dentist or local pharmacy. 1000 Lives Improvement worked with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to explain that important message in a film featuring Wales’ youngest A&E consultant, Dr Olivia.

7 year-old Dr Olivia and her team of students have already been watched by thousands of people and featured on national television.

More information


Supporting patients with education and practical advice

The Education Programme for Patients (EPP) Cymru delivers self-management education and support in every health board in NHS Wales. EPP Cymru courses aim to support individuals with a chronic condition to develop skills to help them to manage their health and wellbeing. Courses give people the confidence to take responsibility for their own care and make better use of health services, whilst also encouraging them to work in partnership with health and social care professionals.

EPP Cymru is delivered by teams delivering the courses locally who are supported by a team in 1000 Lives Improvement.

EPP Cymru courses

Courses are led by individuals who have personal experience of either living with or caring for someone with a chronic health condition. Two volunteer tutors or EPP Cymru coordinators deliver each course.

- Chronic Disease Self Management Programme (CDSMP) including CDSMP On-line; a six week course.
- Looking After Me (LAM) a course for carers; a six week course.
- Introduction to Self Management (ISM); a three hour taster session.
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Self Management for Life; a 7 week course for people with respiratory disease.
- Diabetes Self Management Programme (DSMP); a 6 week course for people with type 2 diabetes (non-insulin)

Participants have the opportunity to achieve learning credits for undertaking CDSMP and LAM. Certification is provided by Aged Cymru.

More information

www.eppwales.org
Ensuring a healthier Wales

Improving population health is an important part of ensuring health services are sustainable. 1000 Lives Improvement is supporting NHS Wales in key life-stages to make sure that people receive the best care possible.

Better diagnosis and treatment for people with dementia

Dementia diagnosis rates in Wales are lower than in other parts of the UK, even though the population is on average older. Dementia is a progressive disease, but with the right support and assistance it is possible to live well with dementia. An early diagnosis is helpful for people as it enables them to plan their affairs, arrange for help to be in place when they need it and be ready for the future.

1000 Lives Improvement is supporting work across NHS Wales to improve rates of identification and diagnosis of dementia. The dementia programme includes recommendations for memory assessment services to reduce the time between onset of symptoms of dementia and the diagnosis being communicated. An interactive DVD training package has been developed for general practices to help primary care staff diagnose dementia at an early stage and direct people to specialist help.

Caring in the right language

People with dementia often rely on the first language they learned, which in Wales is often Welsh. This means NHS Wales organisations need assessment and screening tools in Welsh. 1000 Lives Improvement is supporting NHS Wales organisations to ensure these tools are available.

Taking action to spot, treat and beat sepsis

Sepsis is a life threatening condition when the body’s response to an infection goes into overdrive and starts to attack its own organs. It can be caused by something as simple as a cut or insect bite, or an infection like pneumonia. It is also a risk following surgery, or for women who have just given birth. Sepsis is a top priority in NHS Wales and every health board and trust is involved in tackling it.

Actions to tackle sepsis

- All NHS Wales organisations take part in World Sepsis Day each year; a global event promoting the best ways of preventing sepsis through raising awareness of the symptoms and action needed
- Staff in all health boards have had rapid response training to use the six key elements of sepsis prevention — known as the ‘Sepsis Six’.
- We use the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) to monitor the health of all hospital patients.
- Many hospital wards keep kits of anti-sepsis equipment to enable quick treatment as soon as sepsis is identified.

Actions to promote thrombosis

Research estimates that 1,250 people are at risk of death every year in Wales from blood clots (thrombosis) that they may develop while they are in hospital. A simple assessment can identify people at risk from blood clots. If people are at risk then there are drugs that can help prevent blood clots and save lives.

To help promote the use of assessments and anti-thrombosis drugs, the national ‘Ask about Clots’ campaign was developed by 1000 Lives Improvement and supported by Lifeblood, the thrombosis charity. The campaign is helping members of the public to understand the risk, so they can ask for an assessment and be given the appropriate treatment. It is also raising awareness among staff to remind them to carry out the assessments and give the necessary drugs.

Giving mums and babies the best start possible

Our maternity network has evolved, having already seen progress made on reducing maternal sepsis, surgical site infections following caesarean sections and the risk of pregnant women experiencing thrombosis.

The new maternity network is maintaining the emphasis on quality and safety, with a dedicated workstream on preventing stillbirths. A new ‘women’s forum’ will make sure that the voice of service users is clearly heard and people using maternity services are involved in improvement work.

Twitter: @1000LivesPlus
Email: 1000LivesImprovement@wales.nhs.uk

Web: www.1000livesi.wales.nhs.uk
Celebrating success with the NHS Wales Awards

The NHS Wales Awards aim to uncover, acknowledge and celebrate good practice that is helping transform health care. Over 160 pieces of work from across Wales were submitted for the 2015 Awards, which will be presented in July.

Shortlisted work in 2015 includes development of a smartphone app for people with autism, establishing paramedic services in primary care, increasing medicines safety, improving diabetes care, creating a ‘virtual ward’ to treat people in their own home, developing health and wellbeing courses for healthcare staff, new approaches to treating chronic respiratory conditions, and speeding up the time taken for patients to return home after a hospital stay.

“The annual awards are a chance to celebrate excellence. The high quality of entries demonstrate that across NHS Wales teams are striving to improve the service they provide to patients in hospital and in the community. They reflect the commitment of our staff to provide safe, efficient and compassionate care.” — Mark Drakeford AM, Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh Government.

Find out more

@1000LivesPlus
YouTube: search for ‘1000 Lives Improvement’
Comment on our blog: www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/
our-blog
Like our student and academic community

Prudent healthcare — sustaining improved care

One of the big themes in NHS Wales at the moment is prudent healthcare. This is helping staff meet the twin challenges of rising demand and limited resources. Key aspects of prudent healthcare include person-centred care, stopping ineffective treatments and ‘over-treatment’, co-production and partnership between professionals and service users, preventative health actions, and preventing avoidable harm.

Supporting communications for improvement

The communications team in 1000 Lives Improvement provides support to staff working throughout NHS Wales with bespoke campaigns, publications and resources. Communications is now seen as an important integral part of making quality improvement work effectively.

The 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community is working with healthcare students across Wales, representing all professions. The Community is encouraging students to embrace the ‘Hello my name is...’ campaign that has been pioneered by Dr Kate Granger MBE and is being adopted around the world.

“‘Hello my name is...’ made me aware of the little things that I can do as a nursing student caring for my patients: treat them as an individual, considering their point of view through good communication and listening to their needs.” — Bethan, nursing student, Bangor University

More information

www.nhswalesawards.wales.nhs.uk

Students promote ‘Hello my name is...’ campaign

The 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community is working with healthcare students across Wales, representing all professions. The Community is encouraging students to embrace the ‘Hello my name is...’ campaign that has been pioneered by Dr Kate Granger MBE and is being adopted around the world.

Students have been at the forefront of the campaign in Wales, which encourages all healthcare staff to introduce themselves when meeting patients.

“‘Hello my name is...’ made me aware of the little things that I can do as a nursing student caring for my patients: treat them as an individual, considering their point of view through good communication and listening to their needs.” — Bethan, nursing student, Bangor University

More information

www.1000livesplu.wales.nhs.uk/apr

1000 Lives Improvement is supporting NHS Wales with practical knowledge and expertise that will help staff provide even better care for patients.