Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience!

What can I do to improve your care today?

“...”

This competition pack includes tools for students, educators and organisations to use to encourage all health professionals to use a universal question that will improve care across NHS Wales.

Further resources can be found online at: www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition
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We are grateful to the following contributors for their support in the production of this pack: Carolyn Canfield, Dr Aled Jones, Angela Williams, Dr Andy Carson-Stevens, Mike Spencer, and Sarah Puntoni.

## Call to action!

If you’re a healthcare student studying in Wales, then use this competition pack on your next placement to ask one simple question that will improve care across NHS Wales.

If you are reading a printed version of this pack, all web-links and resources are available at: [www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition](http://www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition)
How can asking a simple question improve patient experience?

‘Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience’ is a national competition for all health profession students in universities across Wales, supported by the 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community. It challenges students to use a universal question to support listening and learning at the frontline.

“What can I do to improve your care today?” is a simple question that can provide a platform for students and NHS staff to launch meaningful conversations with their patients and their families. It can lead to patients sharing their personal narratives to initiate the relevant actions to improve their care.

Patients should often be considered experts in their own condition and by recognising their role as teachers and building rapport through discussion, this can help to prevent errors and alleviate issues that may be troubling them.

This simple contribution to person-centred care can help students, educators and organisations in their efforts to understand, and continually improve, what it feels like to be a patient in their care and possibly resolve issues that could potentially turn into complaints.

Listening fundamentally relates to identifying and meeting the needs of individual patients.

To support this national improvement competition:

- Students have the opportunity to build their skill-set to improve the patient experience.
- Educators can encourage students to get involved and utilise the materials within this pack to supplement existing educational content.
- Organisations can support students when they are participating in the competition on their placements and encourage their staff to get involved too.

To participate in the competition, with guidance from their practice mentor, students will ask the question to 3-5 patients, record the responses, and submit a personal reflection on these interactions to the 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community.

The competition will run from 7 September to 1 January 2016. A peer review panel will select up to 3 winners to attend the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare in Sweden in April 2016.

Victoria Evans-Park,
Lead for 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community

Felicity Hamer,
Manager for 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community
Calling all students...

Get involved in the Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience competition to develop your professional and communication skills, and demonstrate your competency in person-centred care - all essential requirements for the NHS workforce of the future.

You will gain experience of making small changes and taking simple actions to meet the needs of your patients to improve their overall care experience.

By asking the question, you will recognise the complexity of healthcare systems and how some of the basic care requests can get lost, whilst also understanding the difficulties faced by staff in directly responding to all patient requests. You will also appreciate to never underestimate the importance of reaching out to the team around you to share these requests.

If you routinely ask and act on this simple question, there can be tangible benefits not only for your patients but also for your educators, and your placement organisation.

To participate in the competition you will ask up to 5 patients during your placement the simple question: ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ By asking the question, you can promote patients’ involvement in their own care, focussing on their needs and engaging them in decisions relating to their treatment.

Asking this simple question will support you to make an active contribution to quality improvement by making small changes that can provide patients, their carers and family, with a much better experience of care.
The 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community has created this pack to equip you with skills to understand the power of asking a simple question to listen to the needs of your patients and lead changes that improve the quality of care your patients receive.

You are ideally placed to put yourself in the position of a patient as fresh eyes on the healthcare system. This competition can support you with the following learning opportunities:

- Developing your professionalism, communication skills and a valuable competency in person-centred care.
- Understanding how asking a simple question can enable you to identify and make small improvements in hospital or community based care.
- Acknowledging the importance of listening to patients and understanding their role as your teachers and experts in their own condition.
- Building relationships with patients which can improve their care experience.
- Engaging in conversation with patients and their families which can initiate relevant actions to help prevent errors or alleviate issues that may be troubling them.

Educators can use this pack, with its focus on patient-centred communications, to provide opportunities for rich learning and teaching to occur. The act of discussing and making sense of patient’s answers in response to the question bridges the gap between teaching and clinical practice.

Organisations are invited to use this pack to actively support students to take part in the competition and to ensure that they receive support in their clinical placements. Wherever you routinely ask and act on the question, it can help organisations to understand and continually improve what it feels like to be a patient in their care and resolve issues that could potentially turn into complaints.

The Prize!

We are offering up to 3 participating students a funded place to attend the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare in Sweden on 12 - 15 April 2016.

To be in with the chance of winning a place, all you need to do is explore the section ‘How to get involved!’.
Ask One Question - how to get involved!

You’ve now heard how using this simple question can make a difference for your patients, you, your educators and your placement organisations. To take part in the competition, you will need to ask and record the response to the simple question - ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’

Below are three easy steps to get involved

1. Discuss and agree with your mentor or ward manager on your placement, up to 5 (but no less than 3) patients who can be asked ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ We’ve created a helpful letter you can share with them (Appendix C).

2. Record the experience! This bit is for your information only, but it would be helpful for you to jot down notes on what happened to refer to later. Consider the following at each interaction:
   - How did it feel to ask the question?
   - What were the different responses you heard from each of your patients?
   - Did you take any action in response? Did you consider any small test of change to try out for the next encounter with a patient?
   - Did you notify a more senior member of staff if the patient’s response required action?

3. Record the responses given by all of your patients, any actions you took, and submit a personal reflection on the interactions (as outlined in the submission criteria below).

Peer support! Why not get together with friends to discuss the resources in this pack? You can share tips to prepare you for asking the question to your patients!

Role play! Why not explore how you can use the question in different settings with a fellow student? One student could play the role of patient, whilst the other the role of the questioner. This could prepare you for any ideas, challenges or surprises that may come up!
Submission Criteria

You can submit your competition entry in a variety of ways including our online form, by video or audio recording, or by email. Your entry will need to follow Driscoll’s (2007) ‘What? So what? Now what?’ reflective model:

- **What?** What were the responses you received from asking each of your patients the question?

- **So what?** What actions did you take by listening to each of your patient’s responses? Did you change how or when you asked the question based on some of the early patient responses? Did any of the responses link to areas of potential harm?

- **Now what?** What have you learnt from the experience and how can you apply this in future clinical practice? How does this link to your current studies? Has this made you think about patient harm?

Submission guidelines

- Your submission can be sent in by choosing one of the following ways:
  - Using the online form at: http://bit.ly/aoqcompetition
  - Sending your video message or audio recording using the online file sharing website www.mailbigfile.com – make sure you include in the message field your name, email address, course you’re studying, university and the organisation where you asked the question!
  - Emailing your written reflection to: 1000livessec@wales.nhs.uk

- The word limit for a written reflection is 500 words.

- The time limit for a video message or audio recording is up to 2 minutes long.

- No patient identifiable information should be included.

- Please include your email address, the course you’re studying, and the organisation where you undertook the activity.

- **The deadline for submissions is 1 January 2016.**

Supporting you to Ask One Question

We have created letters (Appendix A, B & C) that you can share with your educators, and patient experience leads at your placement organisation to make them aware of the competition and to gain their helpful tips and support.

The letters will help you discuss the activity with your mentor or ward manager on placement to share the benefits of why you’re getting involved and to help you identify patients that can be asked the question.
Resources

- A blog by Dr Andy Carson-Stevens: ‘A small question – a potentially huge outcome’
  www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/andy-carson-stevens

- An article by Cardiff University students involved in the pilot to adapt the activity using the model for improvement.
  www.thepermanentejournal.org/issues/2013/fall/5530-medical-students.html

- A Prezi presentation used by the IHI Open School Cardiff University Chapter to explain what Ask One Question is all about.
  www.prezi.com/o96dhys3p03g/ask-one-question/

- A video of former Cardiff University Open School leader, Ben Cosway, talking about his experiences of Ask One Question.
  www.ihi.org/education/ihiopenschool/Chapters/Pages/AskOneQuestion.aspx


Before getting started, why not access some of the useful resources listed below. Afterwards you should have a clear overview of ‘Ask One Question’. Why not take the opportunity to share your learning with fellow students?
1. Why should I ask the patient one question?

The question displays common courtesy but also allows you to communicate and connect with your patient. Asking this simple question will help you to identify your patients’ daily goals. For example, their goal might be to walk unaided to the cafeteria, make a phone call to a relative, clarify some uncertainties over medication or just have a chat. By asking this straightforward question you can learn how simple actions can make a big difference to a patient and their families.

2. When should I ask the question?

The pilot study carried out by medical students at Cardiff University suggested that the best time to ask the question was at the end of a consultation or care-giving once rapport with the patient has been established. However, with guidance from your placement mentor, you may plan to ask your patient the question at a different time.

3. Where should I ask the question?

Asking the patient ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ can be used at any placement setting, whether that’s in primary care such as a GP practice, or secondary care at a hospital or community based setting.

4. What should I do if I don’t know what action to take?

Speak to your mentor or ward manager! If you feel that a patient’s request is out of your sphere or competency, then get advice. Your mentor is there to support and guide you for any situations where you feel uncomfortable.

5. What support do I get?

The 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community is here for you to share any ideas or suggestions you might have for getting involved in the competition. However, should you need support in asking the question, then we recommend that you approach your educator and practice mentor for support on placement. We also suggest you reach out to your fellow peers to find out how they plan to get involved and to share your experiences of asking the question.

6. Do I need permission?

No! Asking your patients ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ is a matter of common courtesy – it demonstrates your understanding of person-centred care, and that you value the views of your patient and their families.

7. How much time will this take?

Asking the question and carrying out tasks as a result should take no longer than 5 minutes. This is based on the pilot study carried out at Cardiff University medical school. The competition requires you to ask 3 to 5 patients and record the experience thereafter in a personal reflection. The activity should not be time or resource intensive, and shouldn’t be an additional burden to your day job on placement!
For educators, Ask One Question bridges the gap between teaching and clinical practice by enabling the act of discussing and making sense of patients’ answers in reply to ‘the question’.

Ask One Question can support the achievement of quality improvement learning outcomes in addition to opportunities in other areas of the curriculum such as communication skills and reflective practice. It can engender a mindset in learners with which to build the knowledge and skills for continuous person-centred quality improvement in Wales.

Examples of how Ask One Question can support quality improvement teaching and learning opportunities across health profession studies are as follows:

- Students can collate responses to asking one question in terms of the six dimensions of quality that are discussed in IQT Bronze and in the wider quality improvement literature.

- Patient responses can provide useful intelligence for students who are looking for areas of patient care to improve. Translating patient responses into achievable improvement questions can help with learning the phases of the Model for Improvement.

- Students can reflect on the process of asking the question and receiving a reply within communication skills and interpersonal skills teaching sessions. Ask One Question provides examples of how an open question is asked and answered and how open questions are sometimes followed by closed questions to generate more specific information. Ask One Question is a listening exercise and patients’ responses can trigger a discussion about empathy and how individuals and organisations should listen to patients.

- Inter-professional learning by bringing together, either physically or virtually, students from different professional groups to discuss similarities and differences when they undertook the Ask One Question activity and the contrasting responses patients provide.

- Ask One Question can be used to trigger reflection on action and areas of further learning required by the student, using Driscoll’s (2007) experiential learning cycle: ‘What, So What, Now What?’.

- The learning derived from patient responses can be discussed in relation to NHS Wales policy and guidance, such as the Listening Organization White Paper or Achieving Excellence - providing an opportunity for students to reflect on how their actions align with NHS Wales priorities.
To help the ward sister (or anyone in charge of a clinical area) all staff that deliver clinical care and services at the frontline should be in a position to hear patients’ experiences every day. This gives opportunities to directly improve patient experience on a true real time basis.

In the original Ask One Question pilot in Cardiff the responses gave a snapshot of what patients thought would improve their stay in hospital. The majority of requests were for practical issues such as giving access to items (such as newspapers, blankets and slippers), basic care needs (such as drinks of water), communication issues (such as what is happening, why and when) and medical needs (such as pain relief). The responses correlate well with what the three domains of patient experience described in the Framework for Assuring Service User Experience tell us about what makes a good patient experience and by identifying what patients ask for regularly, individuals can be more proactive in offering support in these areas rather than waiting to be asked.

This can be achieved by reviewing the information collated by the students while they are on placement to see what changes and improvements can be made to anticipate, rather than just respond, to patient needs. For example, proactively offering drinks rather than waiting to be asked.

There is also no reason to restrict the asking of the question to students. All staff (including those who visit clinical areas to provide care and services) could be encouraged to use this approach when they interact with patients.

All patient requests collected by students can then complement feedback obtained by existing routes (such as surveys, stories, complaints and compliments) to obtain a good overview of patient experience, hence the importance of the link with the patient experience lead.

The discussion above relates to hospital care, however the same question can be asked in all settings where healthcare is delivered. Experience in the pilots from general practice suggests that many of the issues raised relate to organisational issues such as availability of appointments, appointment lengths and access issues such as car parking. It will be important to ensure that there are opportunities for issues raised with students to be discussed with the practice team to ensure that the patients’ messages are heard. There is little experience to date in other community and primary care settings although there is no reason why the approach could not be applied there.

2 Ward et al (2013) How Asking Patients a Simple Question Enhances Care at the Bedside: Medical students as agents of quality improvement
Dear colleague,

Supporting students to ‘Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience’: Opportunities for learning & teaching

We are writing to share details of a new national competition launched by the 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community, and to invite you to encourage students on their placements to take part.

‘Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience’ is a competition for all health profession students in universities across Wales.

It challenges students to use the simple question ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ to promote person-centred care, and to understand and improve what it feels like to be a patient in their care.

To participate in the competition, students will ask up to 5 patients the question and share a personal reflection of their experience with 1000 Lives Improvement. Students will receive recognition for their involvement and their entry could win them a funded place to attend the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare in Sweden in April 2016.

The competition aims to build upon the focus on person-centred communication within education programmes across universities, and bridges the gap between teaching and clinical practice by providing a platform for discussion around patients’ answers in response to ‘the question’.

Please find enclosed the competition pack for students which includes further information and a specific section on how ‘Ask One Question’ can be used by educators to complement existing educational content.

Patient experience leads across NHS Wales organisations have been informed of the competition and invited to use the pack to actively support students on their clinical placements. A key part of their participation is, along with placement mentors, to support students to identify which patients to ask the question and help with any concerns or issues they may encounter.

We would be grateful if you could share the details of this competition with your students, colleagues within your institution and practice support staff. An online version of the pack is available to download from www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition. Further hard copies of the competition pack can be ordered by emailing 1000livessec@wales.nhs.uk

More information is available at www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition and should you have any further queries, please contact 1000livessec@wales.nhs.uk

Kind regards,

1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community
Dear colleague,

**Supporting students to Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience**

We are writing to share details of a new national competition launched by the 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community, and to invite you to support students on placement in your organisation to take part.

‘Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience’ is a competition for all health profession students in universities across Wales.

It challenges students to use the simple question ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ to promote person-centred care, and to understand and improve what it feels like to be a patient in their care.

To participate in the competition, students will ask up to 5 patients the question and share a personal reflection of their experience with 1000 Lives Improvement. Students will receive recognition for their involvement and their entry could win them a funded place to attend the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare in Sweden in April 2016.

All students taking part will be encouraged to share feedback from their patients with a patient experience lead. We hope that by supporting students to take part in your organisation, they can contribute to the existing service user experience work underway across NHS Wales organisations.

1000 Lives Improvement is keen to support your organisation as it continually strives to listen and learn from service users’ experience. By identifying what patients regularly ask for, students and staff can be more proactive in offering support, anticipating what will be asked.

Please find enclosed the competition pack which includes further information and a specific section on how ‘Ask One Question’ can be used within your organisation.

We would be grateful if you could share the details of this competition with your colleagues. The pack is bilingual and available online version to download from [www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition](http://www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition). Further hard copies of the pack can be ordered by emailing 1000livessec@wales.nhs.uk.

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Kind regards,

1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community
Dear colleague,

Supporting students to Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience

We are writing to invite you as a practice mentor to support students on placement in your organisation to take part in a new national competition launched by the 1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community,

‘Ask One Question to Improve Patient Experience’ is a competition for all health profession students in universities across Wales.

It challenges students to use the simple question ‘What can I do to improve your care today?’ to promote person-centred care, and to understand and improve what it feels like to be a patient in their care.

To participate in the competition students are encouraged to work with their practice mentor to identify up to 5 patients to ask the question, and then share a personal reflection of their experience with 1000 Lives Improvement. Students may also contact you with any queries resulting from the responses they collect.

In your role as a key support to students in practice, we wanted to ensure you were aware of this exciting opportunity. Educators will be encouraging students to take part in the competition as part of the increasing focus on quality improvement within education programmes in Wales. Students will also be proactively taking part as an extra curricula activity.

Students will receive recognition for their involvement and their entry could win them a funded place to attend the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare in Sweden in April 2016.

Please find enclosed the competition pack which includes further information and a specific section on how ‘Ask One Question’ can be used within your organisation.

We would be grateful if you could share the details of this competition with your colleagues. The pack is bilingual and available online version to download from www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition. Further hard copies of the pack can be ordered by emailing 1000livessec@wales.nhs.uk.

More information is available at www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/aoq-competition and should you have any further queries, please contact 1000livessec@wales.nhs.uk.

Kind regards,

1000 Lives Improvement Student and Educator Community