Patient Status at a Glance

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Context and Problem

Context
Aneurin Bevan Health Board is an integrated healthcare organisation that incorporates primary and secondary care. This service improvement is led by the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) and forms part of the Transforming Care programme. Ebbw ward predominantly provides care for patients following a period of care in an acute hospital. The patient group predominantly nursed on the ward are older persons requiring rehabilitation. Therefore the staff group focuses on a multi agency approach including; physiotherapist, occupational therapist, social worker, medical, nursing staff and the housekeeping team.

Problem:
The ward comprises two teams – 16 beds on each team. The office is in the middle of the two wards and houses a white board that identifies what patients are on the ward. Due to the position of the board it was not appropriate to undertake handover (form shift to shift) at the board, also there was no means of staff gaining information relating to patient status in a timely manner. This led to safety and reliability concerns, numerous interruptions relating to patient status as well as inefficiencies and waste in care management.

Assessment of problem and analysis of its cause:
The assessment took the format of an activity follow; this process consists of a registered nurse being observed for a total of twelve individual hours and their actions recorded on a pre printed template. This highlighted that registered nurses were interrupted 25 times out of 43 in relation to patient status (general patient enquiry). Following analysis of these results the team agreed that the ward layout and the single room model did not facilitate the effective communication of patient status or promote safe efficient delivery of care. Undertaking the Patient Status at a Glance module, which is an integral part of the Transforming Care programme, would address these deficits.

Strategy for Change

Intervention:
The intervention was a patient status board; the model for improvement identified was Plan Do Study Act (PDSA). In line with the principle of this model the board was reviewed and altered until a workable format was found. It was agreed to set the board up using the same lay out of the ward. Patient confidentiality was considered during all stages.

Strategy for change:
Representatives from all members of the multi agency team met and agreed the layout of the board. A task and finish group was formed to produce a number of frequently used symbols to represent a patients status. It was agree that the board would be audited and changed as part of the continuous improvement cycle. The staff were educated on the intended use of the board and their responsibility in updating the relevant symbols. Initially one section of the ward was selected, and the board was trialed on a daily basis until its use was appropriate and sustained. Following this the use of the Patient Status at a Glance Boards were extended to the remaining pods.

Effects of Changes

Measurement of improvement:
The change was measured using process measures and outcomes. A repeat activity follow showed that there was a reduction in interruptions relating to patient status from 25 (50%) to 5 (28%). One example of feedback from nursing staff states “efficient way of gathering patient information”. This ultimately impacts positively on patient safety and efficient delivery of patient care.

Effects of changes:
The improvement has resulted in a visual aid which all staff can use to gather information. The board also promotes team engagement, timely and reliable handover of information; therefore promoting patient safety.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learnt:
• Involvement of the whole team
• The use of small tests of change
• Multi agency involvement from the beginning of the process
• Open communication throughout

Message for others:
Agree on the use of symbols early on in the process and ensure that the board is fit for purpose. The use of the board is only as effective as the staff using it, therefore ongoing monitoring to sustain its impact is essential.