



Short Case Study

Writing on the Wall

Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

The beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic was a time of great uncertainty, rapid change, and staff redeployment. Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust responded quickly to support staff and encourage innovation.

Adapting to the changing situation on the wards was challenging due to rapid changes of personnel, people adapting to new roles, colleagues and teams, and at times a lack of clarity as to who was managing who.

ONE REDEPLOYED STAFF MEMBER SAID:

“ I feel I am here on this ward, and I don't know what I am doing, and those who do know what they are doing are too busy for me to ask.

In response, a rapid low-tech communication method to try and improve communication and ways of working was put in place. A piece of paper stuck on the wall was introduced. If staff had questions they wanted to ask, or suggestions to improve the system or practice, they wrote it on the wall.

This became a focal point for the team and enabled sharing of information and ideas. The shifting workforce

were able to pull together systems, at pace, to help people feel supported and improve practice.

This early attempt to bring different perspectives around a common situation contributed to the development of ‘huddles’ where the whole team gathers round a board in the morning and talks about the day ahead.

Benefits for patients

- Safe and effective care from staff who felt supported

Benefits for staff

- Writing on the wall brought a positive experience of being able to constructively challenge practice, and be challenged by others with different experiences, perspectives and expertise

Benefits for the Trust

- All wards now have early morning huddles (this has replaced the need for using ‘writing on the wall’)
- Development of a culture of using common sense and collaboration to make suggestions and changes, and being prepared to try something new

Next steps

- The practice of huddles is embedded promoted as a positive innovation

What we have learnt

- Sharing of experience, ideas and perspectives can lead to new, improved ways of working

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