

Improving weekdays to weekends handover at base-site hospitals at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust: a quality improvement project

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Introduction

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust runs a unique model of healthcare provision in the NHS, because it includes a specialist emergency hospital (NSECH), which is England's first purpose-built specialist emergency care hospital, with emergency consultants on-site 24/7, as well as consultants in a range of specialties working 7 days a week. Patients are admitted to this hospital before being transferred to one of three base-site hospitals to continue their inpatient care.

In these base-site hospitals, a junior doctor covers an average of 2–3 wards on a weekend. We noticed there was an absence of a standardised method of weekdays to weekend hand-over at base-site hospitals.

Aim

Improve the quality of weekdays to weekends handover, leading to improved continuity of inpatient care.

Methods and results

Recurrent PDSA cycles were undertaken between November 2021 – May 2022. At baseline, only 36% of the doctors and clinical practitioners working at base-site hospitals were satisfied with the handover, with the majority suggesting the use of an electronic handover model. This model was piloted at one of the base-site hospitals. After receiving positive feedback, targeted interventions were employed, and the electronic model was implemented at all other base-site hospitals. 100% satisfaction was reported among junior doctors and clinical practitioners after completion of the interventions.

Conclusion

Implementing electronic handover model has significantly improved the quality of weekdays to weekends handover. To ensure sustained engagement, incorporation of the new electronic model of handover into the base-site induction is advised.

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