“Just Do It”: nurse-led change in Nottingham

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At Nottingham University Hospitals Trust, nurses can improve patient safety and the experience of patients by putting forward a “Just Do It” idea. Just Do It is part of the trust’s overall improvement programme, Better for You, which has been running since 2009. Examples of successful Just Do It ideas include introducing pressure-relieving seating for older patients, as well as a ward whiteboard that includes details of each patient’s named nurse.

The “Just Do It” scheme at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUH) allows nurses and other members of staff to quickly champion and action good ideas. By proposing a Just Do It idea, nurses can improve patient safety and experience.

A Just Do It is an idea that makes things better for patients, their relatives or staff. It can be very simple, like rearranging the layout of a clinic area to provide more privacy, or involve bringing in new technology or changing ways of working to improve patient care. The only requirement for suggesting a Just Do It idea is for staff to provide a short, persuasive case for the benefits, with an assurance that the change can be made relatively quickly.

The Better for You programme The Just Do It scheme is part of Better for You, our established whole-hospital improvement programme. Better for You was launched in 2009, using Lean improvement methods (NUH, 2013). Its priorities have been influenced by publications including the Francis (2013) and Keogh (2013) reports, as well as the Berwick review (National Advisory Group on the Safety of Patients in England, 2013).

The programme captures improvements in quality, safety and value for money. It focuses on changing behaviour and culture towards a model of continuous challenge and improvement.

Just Do It arose from the Better for You programme after simple ideas were revealed that could be put in place locally and it was realised that they could be a powerful force for change.

How does it work? The whole ethos of Just Do It is to free people so they can take action quickly. The administration costs of the scheme are very low.

Nursing and other staff can post ideas on an intranet forum, complete a short form or simply suggest a Just Do It as part of wider improvement work. Just Do It changes are also actively encouraged as part of service improvement because small changes can unlock wider service developments.

The simple, but widely promoted, intranet forum encourages staff to post and share ideas for improvements across all services. For example, one service may have introduced a new way of working that could be of benefit to similar services; alternatively a member of staff might have seen a good idea that has been working well elsewhere. These ideas are posted centrally and can then be picked up by other departments.

Thanks to the support of Nottingham
Hospitals Charity, the Just Do It scheme can use a small pool of funds. This helps put ideas with potential into practice when they might otherwise be unable to quickly find specific funding. Employees can make bids for funding of up to £2,500. Every project must be able to demonstrate patient benefit and must have measurable outcomes to ensure the funding is used effectively. Senior colleagues from communications, Better for You and Nottingham Hospitals Charity rapidly approve or reject funding requests. In 2014, 52 bids, covering a range of projects, were successful in getting funding.

**Examples of Just Do It ideas in action**

One Just Do It idea involved securing funding for a blanket-warming cabinet for patients waiting in reception to go into theatre after a temperature audit highlighted that patients were arriving at theatre with temperatures below those recommended in guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Escort staff were also trained in how to take temperatures so they can take appropriate action.

A small amount of the charity’s funding helped a nurse to repurpose a redundant space in an antenatal inpatient ward, creating a private area for patients. Patients can more easily make a snack when they wish and have another space to talk privately about the issues they face.

Recent bids have also involved the purchase of a water-filled seat to reduce the risk of pressure ulcers for older inpatients (Box 1), and the purchase of equipment for a urology ward based on patients’ views (Box 2).

**Box 1. REDUCING PRESSURE ULCER RISK WITH A WATER-FILLED SEAT**

Older inpatients with severe respiratory problems can spend much of the day seated and are, therefore, at risk of pressure ulcers. Carolyne Baker, a deputy ward sister, came up with the idea of purchasing a water-filled seat. She says the chair has proved even more useful than expected for patients: “The seat is in use almost all of the time especially for patients who can’t move very much when seated.”

“We’ve also found other ways to employ it for patients. For example, it has proved useful for patients with oedema because the chair makes it easier to keep their legs raised while allowing them to remain in a sitting position, which is more comfortable for their breathing.”

**Box 2. ACTING ON PATIENTS’ VIEWS**

On a urology ward, Sister Fay Allen used the Just Do It scheme to bring in changes following a ward review involving patient representatives. Many patients only stay on the ward for one or two days so families often find it difficult to get to know which nurse is leading their care.

In response, Ms Allen bid for a whiteboard to detail which nurses are lead carers. This makes the lead carer more visible for patients and relatives, ensuring people have a name to use when they want to ask a question or make a comment.

Ms Allen also found that patients coming back from theatre, after the evening meal had been served, wanted easier access to food. In response, the Just Do It fund has provided a microwave so recovering patients can have hot drinks, soups and meals.

Promoting the scheme’s successes

Staff enjoy getting involved with Just Do It and can clearly see the benefits. The central communications team promotes successful ideas to all 14,000 staff members. Good ideas are promoted at prominent poster sites, in the news section of the staff intranet and by social media. A biannual awards session brings people from the ward to the boardroom to explain their ideas, how they implemented them and their impact on patient care.

Areas in which one bid is successful tend to become fertile ground for other innovations. They also make for a more change-friendly working environment.

Empowering nurse innovators

Nurses at our trust know there is an easy route to implement innovative changes to improve patient care, even if an obvious budget is not available. Just Do It empowers and celebrates successful nurse innovators who turn their specialist frontline knowledge into better ways of working and caring for patients at very little cost. It provides leverage for positive change, thereby promoting the trust’s wider approach to continuous improvement.

Being prepared to “Just Do It” and make changes to develop our service for patients and relatives is an essential part of being the best we can be for them.

References


For more on this topic go online...

- Using clerical staff to free up ward sister time
- Bit.ly/NTClericalStaff