ideas, such as altering patient handover times, reorganising storage facilities and making better use of data. It also provides a systematic and inclusive approach to improving the reliability, safety and efficiency of the care delivered in a ward. For example, the Well-Organised Ward module takes an approach to simplify the workplace and reduce waste by ensuring that everything is in the right place at the right time. Part of this process is called 5S (Box 1).

The programme is designed to provide long-term sustainable changes to ways of working that are constantly revisited. It takes 1–2 years to work through the modules – this length of time ensures that changes are driven and implemented by ward sisters and have been adequately thought through and are sustainable. The module tools empower frontline ward staff to own and embed change, and to routinely question procedures.

**BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PRODUCTIVE WARD**

The core objectives of the programme are to:

- Increase the clinical time spent with patients;
- Enable safer and more reliable care with fewer healthcare-associated infections and falls, and improved quality of patient observations;
- Improve the experience of staff and patients by asking for their views and opinions;
- Organise wards so that they work more efficiently;
- Reduce interruptions and improve communication;
- Reduce the time taken for handovers and ensure clear lines of accountability.

The Productive Ward provides performance measures designed to track how wards are performing against these core objectives.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) was formed in April 2006 from a merger of two large hospitals, Nottingham City Hospital and the Queen’s Medical Centre.

The Productive Ward provided an opportunity for the trust to engage nursing and midwifery staff in delivering better quality care in a consistent manner throughout the organisation.

The NHSI had developed and tested the approach on wards at four test sites, which tested different Productive Ward modules on one ward. The next step for the institute was to test a prototype toolkit on a whole hospital: NUH is one of two national pilot sites – the other is Central Manchester and Manchester Children’s University Hospitals NHS Trust.

The programme of work at NUH started in September 2007 and the plan is that 96 wards will have implemented the programme by summer 2010.

With the support of the NHSI, the summer of 2007 was spent planning the project. To do this, we needed to:

- Recruit two project nurses;
- Organise a steering group;
- Communicate with ward sisters;
- Learn the lean concepts;
- Plan the project’s roll-out on wards.

At the time, we had no idea what was involved in the implementation of the Productive Ward modules because many were still being written. This was a challenging time as the official launch date for implementation on the wards was January 2008.

**Key people**

The executive team supports the initiative and the chief executive and director of nursing, midwifery and service improvement are the main sponsors and drivers. The trust board is also supportive and some non-executive directors are actively involved in the project’s implementation.

The project steering group meets every month and has been key to the success of the project (Box 2). Ward sisters attend the steering group to share their experiences of implementing the Productive Ward and provide essential feedback. Patient representatives have also been involved.

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

The project is managed by the assistant director of nursing and the key function of the project leader is to plan and implement its roll-out.

The project team realised that effective project management requires extensive planning and coordination for the Productive Ward to be rolled out successfully (Fig 2, p25). The project plan has an eight-ward roll-out every 9–10 weeks, with facilitated learning support from the project nurses for 13 weeks. This allows for some time to review and reflect and enables the project team to help ward teams with implementation.

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**FIG 1. MODULAR STRUCTURE OF THE PRODUCTIVE WARD**

This article has been double-blind peer-reviewed