Kidney disease is a lifelong public health problem that costs the NHS billions with no cure. Patients and team members value being listened to and asked to help. Thorough groundwork is essential and takes time to do well. Improving nutritional management through safe, effective and efficient communication can delay the progression of disease and healthcare costs during childhood, but need to be delivered in a simple, consistent and timely manner.

Service evaluations have identified patient and healthcare gaps in communication that require a systematic approach to improving (the delivery of better) clinical care. This will then be electronically linked to My Medical Record to improve patient access to advice and support. Teams engage better with QI and see the relevance and benefit more than research due to the quick implementation of changes. However, but both have clear and complimentary roles.

**Project aims**

The project team had 2 aims:

1. To reduce variation in communication for children and their families in advanced (stage 4 to 5) disease, attending the regional paediatric nephrology service at UHS;
2. To develop a quality improvement ethos and programme for the regional paediatric nephrology team at UHS.

**Project Design/Strategy**

A multiprofessional and patient project group was formed consisting of dietitians, nurses, consultants, IT specialists, and service users (young people and parents). A questionnaire was given to children, families and the team to identify key issues in nutritional management communication. This was followed by focus groups to produce themes and discuss key issues in detail. Process maps and cause and effect diagrams were used to understand variability in the process and the patient journey and pathway. This led to the driver diagram development, and the cloud summaries of service comments below.

**Changes made**

- A multi-component and patient-focused mixed-method communication model was developed and introduced to improve accessibility and patient choice, consisting of a dietetic renal team: (i) email; (ii) mobile for texting and direct patient contact calling.
- My Medical Record messaging (web based patient centred communication platform) has also been set up and patients are being registered and a small group have started trialling this.
- A renal dietitians’ contact information business card has being produced, that includes a
  - Electronic nutritional management documentation pathway for the healthcare team has been redesigned. To streamline the process and key information needed for assessment, advice and patient information.
  - This will then be electronically linked to My Medical Record to improve patient access to advice and supporting information.

**Outcomes**

Figure 1. Number of My Medical Record patients and messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total number of patients</th>
<th>Total number of messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Next steps and sustainability**
  - Continue leading improvement in the team at University Hospital Southampton and nationally (PREDI = Paediatric Renal Interest Nutrition Group).
  - Support, train and collaborate with local, national and international dietetic and renal colleagues.
  - Disseminate at National, International and Regional conferences.
  - For team QI fellowship to embed web-based technology into practice and develop team QI skills and ethos, upskilling the workforce.
  - Use my role on KQuIP (Kidney Quality Improvement Partnership) and my QI community membership (NHS Improvement and the health foundation) to enable the above. Alongside my QI involvement in Child Health at University Hospital Southampton and PIER (Paediatric Innovation, Education and Research Network) regionally.
  - This is only the beginning and a whole programme of improvement across the department, within the renal team and nationally are being explored.