Use of an Emergency Decisions Unit to Improve Patient Care and Experience

1. Background

The Emergency Department in Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital previously had a Short Stay Ward, for patients who did not necessarily require formal admission, but were not able to be discharged immediately. This area had limited capacity and often became blocked with patients subsequently requiring admission. Departmental building work gave us the opportunity to repurpose the Short Stay Ward and open a separate Emergency Decisions Unit (EDU). However, snapshot studies showed that the EDU was not being used for as many patients as it could be and when it was used, it was predominantly for the purpose of breach avoidance rather than enhancing patient care or experience.

2. Aims

1. To use the EDU for every suitable patient
2. To make changes to the EDU environment in order to improve patient experience

3. Changes Made and Results

- Use of a ‘pull model’ to empower the EDU Nurse to actively seek out suitable patients and pull them to EDU
- Use education and role modelling to change the culture and embed early EDU use into the department and team
- Adapt the EDU room to make it a nicer space for patients to use

![SPC Chart showing Number of Patients using EDU per day]

We saw a significant and sustained increase in the number of patients going to EDU every day – almost double the pre-project number. On average they went earlier in their patient journey but overall time in the department did not increase.

![Total Number of Patients Using EDU per Month]

FEB – 282
MAY – 553
2166 patients in total

4. Lessons Learned and Sustainability

- Challenges of communicating with such a large and diverse workforce – we used a variety of different platforms to share a single message in order to try and reach all members of the team.
- Importance of patient centred element – this kept us focussed on our overall aim and also helped to engage others, by promoting a way of working where the benefit to patients was so explicit.
- Sustaining this work; inclusion of EDU data in weekly staff communications to continue to promote EDU as a valued area of the department, inclusion in doctors departmental induction, regular evaluation of the inclusion/exclusion criteria to ensure the area stays relevant and beneficial to all appropriate patients.

Meet the TEAM:
Emma Christmas – Emergency Medicine Consultant
Paul Kelly – Band 7 Nurse
Millie Appleyard – Band 5 Nurse

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What our patients said...
- Staff were open to ideas
- Food and drink were supplied and offered regularly
- I was offered a charger which was ideal for me