

Operationalising SafeCare Live – highlighting the benefits

Patient safety and staff happiness is of paramount importance to Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. SafeCare Live was an opportunity for us to ensure safe staffing based on nursing need not numbers.

By operationalising SafeCare Live we have been able to unite the trust in the ambition of safe staffing across all divisions. SafeCare Live has allowed us to move away from divisional staff meetings and has given us visibility of staffing across the hospital at all times, enabling us to maximise the use of substantive and bank workforce through redeployment across the divisions.

Our senior nursing team is now able to make staff moves based on real-time data, prompting further scrutiny of agency usage and promoting the delivery of safe patient care by supplying information on ward staffing levels.

SafeCare Live has also enabled the trust to have a more robust process for the reporting and responding of red flags. Within the system, red flags are reported in real time and responded to by a senior member of the nursing team who will review, action and mitigate as appropriate. All information is then documented within SafeCare Live, giving the wards visibility of responses.

Our challenge

As a trust we were keen to ensure real-time visibility of staffing levels based on patient numbers and patient care needs. During a CQC inspection in 2016 it was recognised that nurse staffing did not reflect the acuity of patients on all wards and that a monitoring tool was required in order to provide appropriate staffing based on acuity.

Safe staffing is fundamental to patient care. By having visibility of staffing levels across wards and departments in relation to patient numbers and acuity, we can respond in real time to roster changes and we are able to monitor patient safety, redeployments and usage of temporary staff.

Our approach

Implementation

Implementation of SafeCare Live was led by the clinical lead and roster manager, and involved all adult inpatient wards, critical care, paediatric ward, neonatal intensive care unit and delivery. The system was piloted in March to May 2017 on five wards, and then rolled out across trust over the next six months.

Operationalising

We are on a continued journey to maximise system use and expand to other areas such as maternity, AMU and the emergency department. iPads are deployed across the wards to enable live updates to be recorded, ensuring the roster is maintained and finalised in a timely manner.

Sustainability

Training is available to ensure consistency in the acuity recorded. Peer audits have been introduced to ensure SafeCare is accurately reflecting acuity in all areas. Check and challenge of scoring is important to promote accuracy. Regular reviews with matrons and ward managers ensure roster template accuracy and that SafeCare settings are updated accordingly.

Our achievements

- We have moved from having divisional staffing meetings to combined staffing meetings. We can look at the staffing picture across the divisions and redeploy staff efficiently.
- SafeCare Live gives full visibility of staffing linked to patient acuity, which provides powerful assurances to the board on patient safety and evidence of actions taken.
- The system facilitates a robust process of reviewing red flags – our wards raise all red flags live, with matrons responding and documenting action taken to mitigate risk when appropriate.
- SafeCare Live has been embraced by the wards, with positive feedback from staff regarding the ease of use and the confidence they have in the system.

Lessons for others

- Ensure that a clinical lead is identified at the start of the project and has continued ownership during operationalisation. This ensures clinical buy in and greater confidence in reporting.
- Engage IT department at the start of the project, particularly if utilising mobile devices.
- Plan ahead by reviewing roster templates and ensuring accuracy of setup to minimise changes required following SafeCare configuration.
- Liaise with other trusts, share experiences, problems, issues and learn from others on the SafeCare journey.