

# Case Study: Critical Care's Adaptation of "What Matters to You?" Conversations

Since its inception in Norway in 2014, "What Matters to You?" Day has grown into an international phenomenon. Two years after its launch, Scotland was the only other country in the world to join Norway in the ground-breaking initiative. Since 2016, 41 countries have embraced the day. On the 6th June 2019, Wirral University Teaching Hospital's (WUTH) Critical Care department joined in with the conversation.

The WUTH Critical Care Team wanted to involve our staff, patients and relatives in influencing the care delivered. The opportunity to have a conversation was invaluable to help to understand what matters to everyone involved in the pathway of care. This forum would contribute to service development and aimed to improve staff engagement.



The department developed a questionnaire to be given to patients, relatives, volunteers and the workforce and asked the following:

- What is most important to you at this moment?
- What would you like to change as a result of this conversation?
- When you have a good day, what makes it good?
- Is there anything else you want to tell me that I have not asked about?
- What can we do differently as a result of this conversation?

The questionnaires are hand delivered to everyone on a fixed day each month, with variable responses dependent on the acuity of the unit. From the conversations, the team can identify themes that are further explored to improve areas such as: safety, staff morale, progression, team work, equipment and feeling listened to.

## Key Outcomes

- Increase in staff engagement, where staff are able to vocalise their concerns, and everyone had the opportunity to act upon feedback in a timely manner
- Improvement in patient experience through a series of quick wins. This had a direct impact upon staff's ability to manage the experience of patient's relatives such as through the "Six Step Door Protocol" (Appendix 2), which was developed after several episodes of feedback about visitors being left at the door
- Anecdotal feedback pointed to a developed model of communication between staff and departmental leaders and managers
- Proactive awareness of impending or current issues affecting safety, morale, teamwork and enabled the horizon scanning of potential gaps in service delivery or the workforce

## Background

Wirral University Teaching Hospital is the largest employer on the Wirral and provides services for approximately 400,000 people across the Wirral and surrounding areas such as Ellesmere Port, Neston, and North Wales. It has around 855 beds across its two sites at Arrowe Park Hospital and Clatterbridge General Hospital.

It has around 5000 staff working across the Trust.

The Critical Care department cares for some of the most acutely ill patients. It is divided into different areas including the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), High Dependency Unit (HDU) and Critical Care Outreach and Follow-Up.

The “What Matters to You?” initiative aims to encourage staff to have more meaningful conversations with a greater level of listening with their patients. It was initially launched in Norway in 2014 and then went on to gain impetus across Scottish healthcare.

Now, the campaign has been shared internationally by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and has an annual awareness day on the 6th June each year, which has the following motto: “ask what matters, listen to what matters, do what matters”.

The Critical Care team at WUTH decided to embrace the initiative on the 2019 awareness day and have adapted it wider to talk to, listen to and act upon what matters to the workforce too.

## Key Aims

- To improve communicative relationships and dialogue between staff, patients and their relatives
- To improve communicative relationships and dialogue between the workforce
- To improve staff engagement and the ability to act upon concerns
- To improve risk mitigation, patient safety and outcomes
- To enable patient-centred care

## Key Stages of Set-up

**Step 1:** Initial research into the project - the Critical Care Nurse & Quality and Governance Lead mapped out the requirements of the initiative. This included scoping out the conversations to be had and looking at best practice from across other organisations who had previously engaged.

**Step 2:** Formulate, design and print the questionnaires – this enabled structure for the conversations and followed the format suggested in the national campaign.

**Step 3:** Plan the schedule for holding the conversations – taking into account patient acuity, visiting times, workloads and staff opportunity for engagement, a schedule for a planned day (and ongoing days) was finalised.

**Step 4:** Utilise the awareness day to launch the campaign – on the 6th June 2019, the first conversations took place.

**Step 5:** Consolidate the findings – thematic analysis was performed by the Critical Care Nurse & Quality and Governance Lead and the first actions were formulated.

**Step 6:** Act upon findings – quick wins and proposals for further action were agreed and new ways of working were implemented.



## How it Works

Initially, the campaign aligned completely to the national awareness day but the realisation following the first round of conversations was that this needed to take place regularly.

The questionnaires are hand delivered to everyone on a fixed day each month. The responses vary, sometimes it is not a good day to ask relatives, patients and the team to complete the questionnaire and have a conversation depending on the acuity of the unit. However, one valuable piece of information is enough to act upon.

## Resources

The staff time required to develop the questionnaire and disseminate them alongside time to have conversations with staff and patients are the only resources used to launch this initiative.

## Key Challenges

- Staff, patient and relative engagement due to the acuity of the unit, this was mitigated by fluctuating the time given for completion.
- Meeting the needs of the respondents. Some responses were outside of the remit of the questionnaire and resources available. Concise and accurate promotion of the purpose of the campaign, as a listening tool, helped to reduce this being an “ask and get” exercise.

## Key Learning

The department learnt that it is important to repeat the initiative on a monthly basis to maintain engagement, ensure that the feedback loop is closed and to continuously capture requirements.

Quick wins also need to be identified and acted upon in a timely fashion to demonstrate to both patients and the workforce the value of the initiative.

## Sustainability

The questionnaires and conversations take place on a monthly basis but the realisation now is that this method of conversation and finding out what is important to each patient, relative and member of the workforce is becoming embedded into daily practice. People feel skilled and confident enough to ask questions that help to understand people in the context of their life and consider competing priorities.

## Next Steps

- The department aim to delve deeper into some of the issues raised to find out more about what can be done to improve them. These include: development opportunities for staff and opportunities for staff to progress
- The team are launching a thank you initiative to ensure that the workforce is appreciated for all they do each day on the unit
- The initiative will be rolled out on a monthly basis
- Quarterly reports of thematic findings and action plans will be developed

## Supporting Material

- **Appendix 2** – Six Step Door Protocol

Relevant websites

<https://www.whatmatterstoyou.scot/>

## Picture Credits

In house and Pixabay:

Arrows - <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/arrows-growth-hacking-marketing-1229845/>



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