



Best Practice – Top Hospitals 2018

Special report: Insights from the winners of the Top Hospitals awards

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Efficiency and performance

Value for money is arguably more important than ever for a strained NHS, making streamlining services and boosting efficiency of paramount importance.

Waiting times in accident and emergency departments are a key indication of how hospitals are performing, and these have been increasing in recent years. The NHS has not met the standard at national level in any year since 2013/14 – a clear indication of the pressure the services are under.ⁱ Improving A&E performance was one of the main priorities set out in *Next Steps on the Five Year Forward View* and specified three targets for waiting times over the next few years, with an ultimate goal of 95 per cent of people seen within four hours in 2020.ⁱⁱ The first target was narrowly missed, with 89.7 per cent of people seen within four hours in September 2017, as opposed to the 90 per cent desired.ⁱⁱⁱ

Access to operational data in real-time has decreased waiting times at some trusts, giving managers a valuable overview of capacity and admissions and allowing them to react quickly to blockages and other issues.

NHS Improvement is working to improve efficiency through data analysis. This year, it launched a delayed transfers of care improvement tool that brings together data already submitted by NHS organisations and local authorities into a dashboard, enabling them to understand where delayed transfers of care are in their area or system.^{iv}

The national Getting It Right First Time programme, which consolidates and analyses data to drive efficiencies, has now expanded to cover more than 30 clinical specialities. Dr Jeremy Marlow, executive director of operational productivity at NHS Improvement says that by exploring the data “with clinicians and trust managers on the ground, the programme not only identifies unwarranted variations in service, it gets to the heart of why they occur and how best they can be remedied”.^v

Case study: Innovation a key element to streamline services

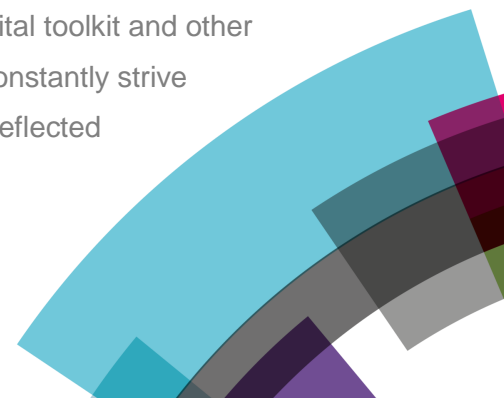
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh (WWL) were the recipients of the CHKS 2018 award for healthcare efficiency. The trust adheres to the strategic values of the 'Four Ps' – patients, performance, people and partnerships, combining effectiveness and efficiency to deliver high-quality patient care.

There have been many operational innovations introduced in recent years that have worked to improve efficiency at the trust. In 2017, the trust's main focus for improvement was the GP Streaming Hub in the Primary Care Centre. In order to create capacity for the most unwell patients in the hospital, WWL designed the co-located Primary Care Centre to stream upwards of 25 per cent of attendees away from A&E. Now, all patients who attend A&E are triaged by a qualified nurse and those that don't have an injury and can walk and talk, are sent to the Primary Care Centre to be seen by a GP or nurse. The centre treats approximately 25,000 patients a year – about 70 patients a day – and these patients can then be referred back to their own GP for any ongoing care they require.

Another area of focus for the trust has been reducing delayed transfers of care (DTCs), and WWL has seen a steady decline in DTCs over the past 18 months. This is largely due to joint working between health care, social care and third sector organisations via an integrated discharge team (IDT) on the Wigan Infirmary site. WWL has the lowest bed base per person in Greater Manchester, which means the trust must ensure that the process for medically optimised patients is smooth.

The trust employs technology in its vision to deliver the best possible healthcare, using apps to drive efficiencies and provide easy access to actionable data. The trust has developed nearly 30 apps using the Qlik platform, which staff can use to monitor performance data at any time. Access to real-time intelligence and greater visibility of where patients are throughout the hospital has aided better patient flow, reducing delays and improving waiting times in the emergency department.

A spokesperson for the trust says: "Embedded data is at the heart of everything we do – health improvement is a science. We measure everything and ensure there is a golden thread that connects business goals to the measures of our success. We use the NHSI model hospital toolkit and other benchmarking data to measure where we are and where we want to be. We constantly strive to be in the top 10 per cent of trusts nationally in everything we do and this is reflected in our award win."



References

- ⁱ <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/urgent-emergency-care/urgent-and-emergency-care-mythbusters>
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NEXT-STEPS-ON-THE-NHS-FIVE-YEAR-FORWARD-VIEW.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/urgent-emergency-care/urgent-and-emergency-care-mythbusters>
- ^{iv} <https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/delayed-transfer-care-dtoc-improvement-tool/>
- ^v <https://improvement.nhs.uk/news-alerts/getting-it-right-first-time-recruits-new-clinical-leads/>

