

Allied Health Professionals Service Improvement Project

Improving Quality and Productivity



The challenge

Access to Allied Health Professionals' services in England needed to be improved. For example, some waiting times were extremely long:

- 40 weeks for a children's wheelchair
- 272 days for an insole from an orthotics service
- 18 weeks for speech and language therapy for 472 pre-school children.

The challenge was complicated by limited management information about the quality of services and limited local ownership of data.

The strategy

The project team focused their efforts on nearly 30 service providers across the UK, helping them develop service-led local improvements, based on:

- building patient participation – ensuring that services receive clear feedback and patients are engaged in redesign
- pathway redesign
- strong local leadership – agreeing plans, setting goals and using data to foster team commitment
- changes in the skills mix – providing better access and reducing costs by identifying roles for assistants.

The learning

- AHP leaders enable teams, through partnership, to build a culture of continuous service improvement
- Attention to metrics at an early stage ensures that services demonstrate impact for their organisations and for commissioners
- Preparation of a project initiation document is valuable and keeps a focus on the improvements to be achieved
- Whole systems change by AHPs, working across organisation and sector boundaries, improves quality and productivity
- Reporting and messaging with internal and external stakeholders are essential for maximising improvements.

The outcomes

98% patient satisfaction

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

Children's occupational therapy
A service redesign involving changing the skills mix and redesigning the initial consultation has led to a better patient experience and reduced waiting times.



Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Community Healthcare

Children's wheelchair service
IT purchased locally has helped to improve service quality and increase productivity: DNAs can now be monitored and equipment can be ordered online, thus cutting waiting times.

£5,000 savings a week

Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust

Physiotherapy service
A service redesign centring on changes in the skills mix has increased the quality of care, reduced waiting times and saved £5,000 a week.

FASTER wheelchair assessments closer to home

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly NHS

Children's wheelchair service
Paediatric wheelchair assessments are now provided as part of an existing appointment close to the child's home, thus improving service quality for patients.



Hampshire Community Health Care

Children's therapy service
Patients have more points of access to the service and productivity has increased thanks to drop-in clinics, a website, leaflets and earlier screening clinics in a child-friendly environment.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Adult therapy service
Better information sharing means that patients transferring from acute care do not have to wait to access intermediate care. Waiting has been reduced from five days to two days and some admissions have been prevented.



Projected savings £18,000

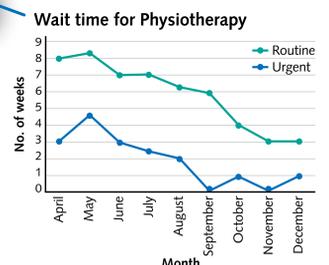
Lincolnshire Community Health

Musculoskeletal physiotherapy service
A service redesign based on self-referral and a same-day triage telephone call has reduced waiting times, improved productivity and increased patient satisfaction.

Waiting times HALVED

Leicester City Community Health Service

Children's speech and language therapy service
Children have faster access to services and there has been a 10% cost saving thanks to more appropriate referrals, better data capture and streamlined processes.



BETTER ACCESS for high-risk patients

West Kent Community Health

Diabetic podiatry service
By reducing inappropriate referrals, engaging with stakeholders and creating new processes, waiting times for high-risk diabetic patients are down while patient satisfaction is up.

Barnet Community Services

Musculoskeletal physiotherapy service
Issues identified in patient focus groups have been tackled with self-referral and an early advice class, cutting waiting times and saving £20,000.



For further details see the accompanying leaflet or visit www.dh.gov.uk/chpo

