**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 intake 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 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.

- **£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
  - Pediatric wheelchair assessments are now provided as part of an existing appointment close to the child’s home, thus improving service quality for patients.

- **£18,000 projected savings**
  - 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.

For further details see the accompanying leaflet or visit [www.dh.gov.uk/chpo](http://www.dh.gov.uk/chpo)