

Reducing Time Spent on Enhanced Observations at Ashurst (PICU)

Ashurst: Dorcas Dan-Cooke, Rajwinder Gill, Paula Stevens, Christine Tan,
OHI: Jill Bailey, Tony Perry, Gurpreet Reen

Background/ Introduction

- Patients who pose particular risk to themselves or others may require close supervision, known as enhanced observations. Nurses monitor patients on enhanced observations constantly for a given period of time, within eyesight or, more rarely, at arms length.
- Staff and patients are not always clear why specific observations occur. On average, 65 hours of staff time were spent doing enhanced observations each day before the project began.

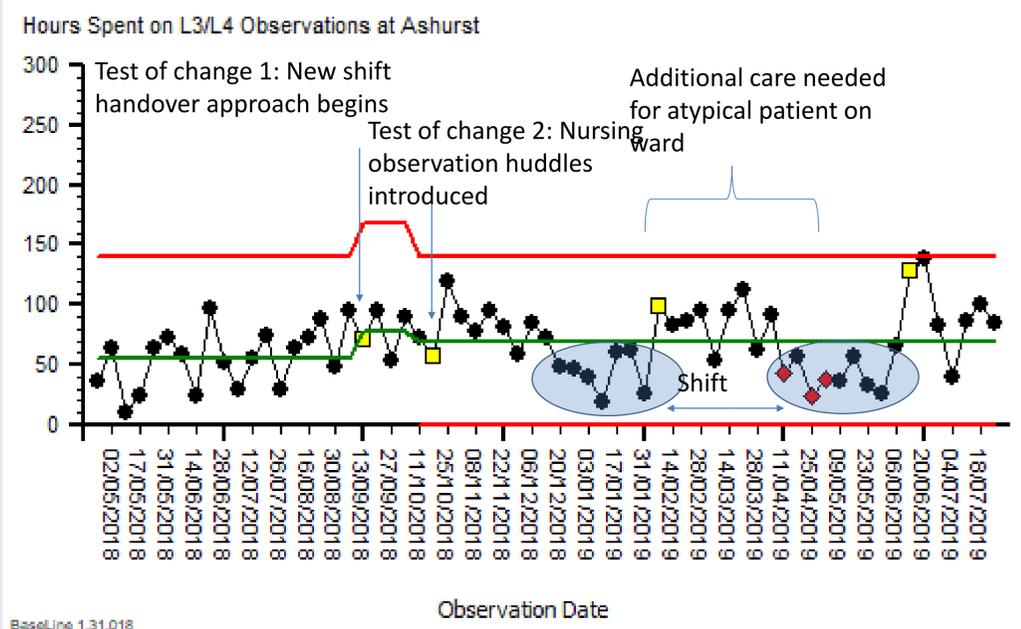
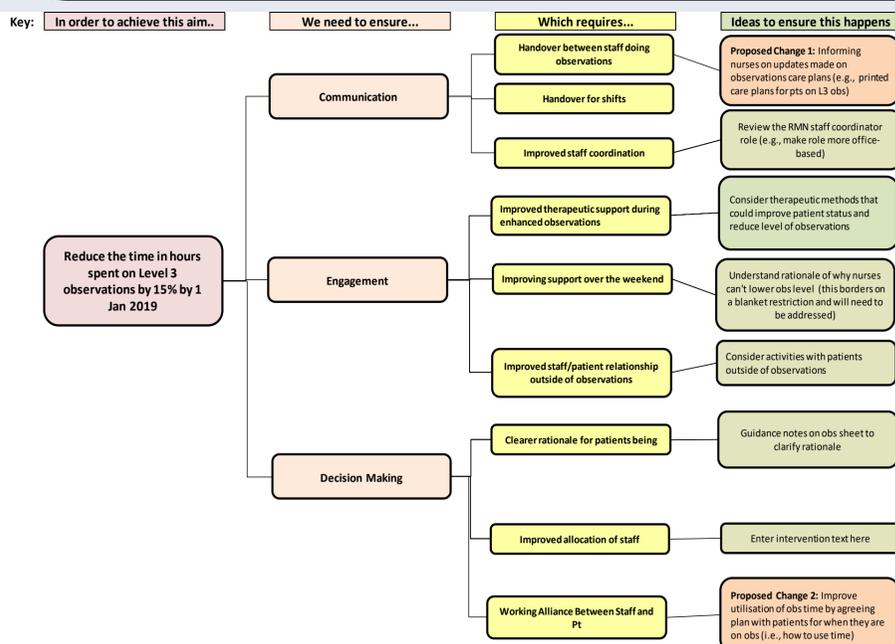


Aims/objectives/audit standards

Reduce the time in hours spent on Level 3 observations by 15% by 1 June 2019.

Method

- The team at Ashurst and OHI collaborated to form the QI project.
- Data was gathered to understand the frequency and duration of enhanced observations being used.
- A literature search was undertaken and together with practice discussions an aim was agreed upon and a driver diagram created to identify possible interventions.
- The team implemented their first test of change: To improve the quality of shift handovers to help nurses starting shifts better manage patients' needs.
- The team implemented their second test of change: To introduce a "nursing observation huddle" to assess whether a patient is ready to be taken off of enhanced observations.



Progress Made

The systematic approach revealed that the purpose of observations was not always clear.

The second test of change has been implemented since mid-October 2018. A 10-point shift below the mean was seen between 11 Apr 19 and 30 May 19; this special cause variation was encouraging but more work is needed to make changes sustainable.

Work is ongoing, but staff and inpatients alike found enhanced observations more purposeful and therapeutic.

Reflections

The Ashurst team have learned several lessons for quality improvement work. These included:

- Establish a physical space for quality improvement to minimise distraction from operational needs where possible.
- Identify a project lead from the outset, but allow for flexibility for people to grow into their roles over time.
- Establish protected time for work with project leads and the OHI team.