

'See it my way'

Using patient, carer and staff stories to improve experience at the Royal United Hospital (RUH), Bath



"Thank you for making this possible – I feel great that everyone listened so carefully to me"
"This is the first time in my life that I have been asked to tell my story to NHS staff, and I really feel I have been heard"

The Context

As part of a strategic approach to improving patient and carer experience, the Royal United Hospital has developed a powerful method of showcasing patient, carer and staff stories to inspire and motivate staff. We call them 'See it my Way' sessions.

We get to see into the speaker's life, we hear and feel the person behind the need, which moves us to improve the way we interact and work.

The Problem

Patient and carer complaints provided evidence of poor communication, and of staff losing touch with, and empathy for, patients and carers.

Patient stories were not being relayed to the organisation and staff stories were never heard.

We needed to think how we could motivate and inspire staff to improve patient and carer experience and find out about their experience of illness. We needed to sustain and nourish a person-centred, listening, compassionate culture and to feel the excitement and aliveness of experience. How could we capture the hearts and minds of staff to improve experience?

The Process

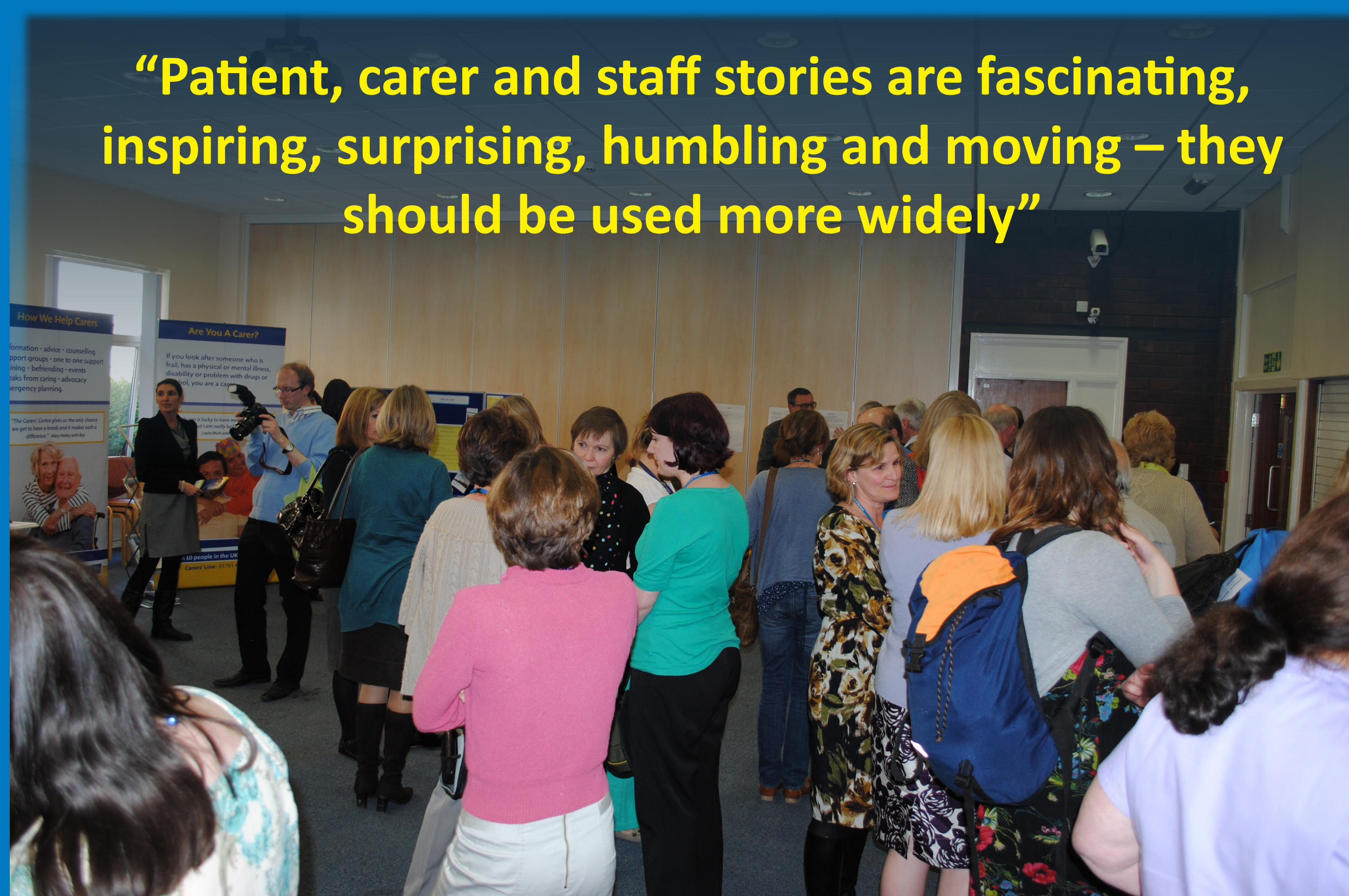
Each event is themed around an area identified as a priority for improving patient experience. Our speakers are people who are not normally heard or given the platform to speak. The Head of Patient Experience Theresa Hegarty, works with a partner organisation to select three patients, two carers and a member of staff to speak to an audience for one hour. Attendance at these events is high with an audience of 100+. Speakers and staff can then find out more about our local improvement work and sign up to become involved.

The Purpose of 'See it my Way' programme

- Hear from patients, family and carers about living with a situation or condition and their hospital experience
- Hear from staff who work with patients with this condition, why they feel inspired by their work and to hear examples of personal practice that improves patient experience
- Connect with the person behind the condition or role
- Provide an arena for compelling storytelling where all staff are invited and welcome
- Raise awareness, understanding and skills of staff
- Role model Involvement and Engagement with our community and staff
- Inspire and intrigue people through real stories
- Facilitate and develop listening skills
- Continue to inspire staff to work with empathy and compassion
- Inform staff regarding current clinical work
- Implement practical change to improve experience.

'See it my Way' events have included:

- living with a learning disability
- living with Parkinson's Disease
- living with dementia
- life as a carer
- dying matters
- living with breathlessness
- living with bladder problems
- being Deaf



"Patient, carer and staff stories are fascinating, inspiring, surprising, humbling and moving – they should be used more widely"

Impact of 'See it my Way' events

Speakers report a strong sense of empowerment at being heard, sometimes for the first time.

Practice and behavioural changes have been implemented Trust wide as a result of the 'See it my Way' events. There is increased awareness in the organisation about family and carer needs and about living with the conditions discussed at the events.

Patients, carers and staff love to be able to tell their story to a listening audience and are moved and impressed by organisations who invite them to do so.

These events provide a visible message about the value of patient, staff and carer involvement and engagement.

"You can never understand a person until you consider things from their point of view until you climb inside of their skin and walk around in it"

Atticus Finch, To Kill a Mocking Bird; Harper Lee