

Press Release

Issued: 11 October 2007

Releasing Time to Care at the Royal United Hospital

The RUH is one of the first trusts in the south west set to roll out a new programme called 'releasing time to care - the productive ward' in January.

This programme is aimed at increasing the amount of time that nurses spend on direct patient care and will look at individual ward settings and how care is delivered.

The programme will focus on six core areas: discharging patients, medicine rounds, toileting of patients, meal times, handover and vital signs observation.

The national initiative was developed following research undertaken by the Nursing Times and Health Service Journal, which found that nurses spend on average only 40% of their time providing direct patient care.

Sharon Preston, who is assistant director of nursing at the RUH, is leading the productive ward programme at the hospital, she says: "This is an exciting opportunity to make a difference to both the patients and nursing staff at the RUH.

"We've identified one ward initially where we will be piloting the productive ward programme. Over the coming weeks the ward team will be reviewing the daily running of the ward and looking at ways of making improvements that will benefit both patients and staff. This may involve something as simple as reorganising supplies cupboards to reduce stock, to the more complex areas, such as how we discharge our patients.

"Releasing more time to spend on patient care will improve the overall patient experience and will have lots of benefits. For example, reducing patients length of stay, rates of infections and complaints. It will also have a positive impact on staff morale and job satisfaction - the better we are at what we do, the happier the patient, the happier the staff."

Ends

Notes to editors:

The productive ward programme is an NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement initiative. It has been piloted for the last year in four acute trusts in England, where these techniques have been tested.

Photo opportunity: Monday 15 October at 10.30am with Sharon Preston and ward staff. Please contact the communications office.

Issued by: Communications office. Telephone 01225 825799