



KINGS COLLEGE HOSPITAL FUND GET STAFF ENGAGED WITH FISH!

Busy acute care trust succeeds in motivating staff by introducing 'cards'.

Kings College Hospital Foundation NHS Trust is a busy acute care Trust with more than 900 beds. King's services a diverse local, regional, national and international population. As well providing the full range of hospital services for our inner city population of 760,000 in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, It is seen as a centre of excellence for many specialities and is leading edge on many new developments.

Since 2004 Kings has been carrying out regular patient surveys to assess what patients really think around all elements of the care we provide including the attitude of our staff. General Medicine is one of the largest and most diverse care groups in the trust. It has over 250 beds and employs more than 300 nursing staff caring for patients with conditions as diverse as acute life threatening events to longer term rehabilitation patients.

General Medicine's patient survey scores had remained constant, despite the many varied teaching programmes, the implementation of behaviour standards and other engagement work that were attempted. The real problem was how to engage extremely busy staff with wanting to carry out that little bit more that the patients had expressed was not there in 100% of situations.

The key objective to initiating and developing this programme has been to change the big stick culture to one of praise and motivation and get staff to realise that although they have to come to work they can actually enjoy it and that their attitude and approach can make their lives and consequently the patients lives better.



How the FISH! approach made a difference

Kings first heard about the FISH! Programme from an American colleague. Information about the programme was passed on to the Head of Nursing (HON) for General Medicine. The HON is responsible for the professional and managerial leadership of all nursing staff employed by the General Medicine Care Group. The FISH! Programme was then fully researched by the HON, obtaining course books and spending time looking at how the principles could be applied to a health care setting within the confines of a British culture i.e. reserved, not really used to free-expression, not used to a 'playing' culture.

Right from the start, one of the biggest barriers to implementation was identified as overcoming the 'American' use of language. If key staff could not get past the 'cultural barrier' and see the great benefits of FISH! It was felt the programme may not be as effective.

As a first step, the HON adopted a 'teaser' programme to raise levels of curiosity in the hospital staff. Prior to any meetings or discussion groups, staff were bombarded with FISH! pictures - yet no explanation was given as to their meaning. This enabled the HON to get the element of play introduced in the earliest stage of the programme.

Initially, it was felt that the first consultative staff meeting should be held with the Matrons, and an Away Day was organised. This was the first planning meeting where the concepts and principles of FISH! were introduced to this extremely influential group. This was followed by a team discussion to identify how the FISH! programme could work, and with which teams the programme could work most effectively. It was agreed to focus initially on the nursing staff, as these were a large group of staff to whom the Matrons had a good level of access.

The next, and most important step, was to engage the Ward Managers. It was decided early on that in order for this programme to work it had to

CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE™

PLAY™

BE THERE™

MAKE THEIR DAY™

"Team working is so much better now we have FISH!"

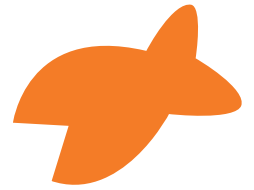
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FISH! has become part of the common language with staff now



be led by the Ward Managers as the people to whom the staff looked to as their immediate leaders. A further Away Day was organised, at which all the attendees were asked to create a fish, with the instruction that it should reflect their ward and team. After creating their fish the ward managers fed back the rationale of their design to the group. The key learning focus from the activity was that the Ward Managers all felt good after taking part in this 'playing exercise' and yet there had been an important element of learning as well.

Then the Ward Sisters were given the challenge of taking the four principles of the **FISH!** Philosophy and coming up with different ways of introducing it and making it work on the wards. Their only direction at this point was that they could not report back to the group with slides - it had to be in an alternative format i.e. a play, singing, art. At the end of the activity day all the ward leaders were fully on board with the programme and keen to start implementing their ideas.

A very detailed planning phase then followed which culminated in a big launch, with the key focus being on the ongoing education that would be needed to underpin the culture change and programme of motivation and reward.

It has been accepted that the most important aspect of the **FISH!** Philosophy adopted by General Medicine has been the praise at the point of good practice. The **FISH!** Cards are at the core of this; when a member of staff is observed carrying out good practice they receive a signed **FISH!** Card and more importantly verbal praise at the point of the event. This has enabled the staff to change the culture of immediately tackling 'bad' practice and not recognising good, and to immediately recognising good practice with the aim of driving out the bad. Each ward has a fortnightly draw where cards are placed in a fish bowl and the winner receives a cappuccino and cookie.

The easiest elements to implement have surprisingly been 'play' and 'choose your attitude'. Staff have really adopted the latter and the impact of this can be seen on the wards at all times. They have a daily attitude board where staff choose the ward attitude for the day as well as other relevant 'fun' displays around the wards, particularly in the staff rooms.

Inside story

FISH! has really been taken up by the staff in a surprising way. Key comments from staff include:

- 🐟 Team working is so much better now we have **FISH!**
- 🐟 Everything seems more professional
- 🐟 I found getting the card really positive - I am going to do that again to get another one!

Ward benefits

- 🐟 One area is using it to celebrate the multicultural differences on the ward
- 🐟 One ward is now celebrating everyone's birthdays as they happen
- 🐟 **FISH!** has become part of the common language with staff now asking for their cards at the point of receiving praise!
- 🐟 One ward sister has found an unforeseen benefit in that it has helped the sense of team and communication between staff working on the ward. Before when staff wanted to change shifts they went to the ward sister who then co-ordinated and communicated the shifts to staff. Now she finds they arrange this between themselves as they all now communicate with each other more effectively.

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