The UCLH Productive Outpatients Programme

A structured approach to engage, train and empower frontline staff to redesign and improve outpatient services

University College London Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust
Provided in partnership with NHS Elect
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What is the Productive Outpatients Programme?

The Productive Outpatients Programme is a structured approach to engaging, training and empowering front line staff to redesign and improve outpatients services.

The programme brings together the best methods and tools applying lean methodologies to improve front line services so they can be applied in a systematic and timely way and deliver real benefits for patients and staff.

In addition to the structured and approved toolkit the programme also includes a strong focus on building local capability and capacity to undertake improvements, identify clinics providing exceptional services and those with areas for improvement; and to redesign services where required, building on the best practice.

The Productive Outpatient approach has helped teams deliver substantial changes at University College London Hospital.

We hope that it will support you to make the improvement you are aiming for within your services.
How was the programme developed?

The Trust worked with a specialist Lean firm (KM&T) to develop the programme outline and then adapted and developed it further into the Productive Outpatients Programme. The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement has worked with University College London Hospital (UCLH) in a supportive role using their tools and knowledge to help UCLH staff to deliver the programme, so that it can subsequently be implemented on a larger scale.

Who is the programme for and what are the potential benefits?

The programme is for all clinical and operational staff working in outpatients services in the acute hospital setting. The exact range of benefits achievable through the programme will vary depending on the areas which require significant improvements. Whilst these may be different for each hospital, specialty, or even clinic, they will commonly all ensure patients and staff experience a better and higher quality service whilst maximising efficiencies.

Benefits have been delivered in;
• Improved patient and staff experience
• Reduced waiting times in clinic
• Improved clinic utilisation
• Reduced amount of rebooking for when appointments are changed due to hospital and patient cancellations
• Reduced new to follow-up ratio appointment ratio
How does it work and what is involved?

The Productive Outpatients Programme is a 24 week rapid programme of change, comprising four key phases;

**Preparation** – getting the team ready to start;
**Knowing where you are** – understanding the current status of clinics and processes using data, interviews and value stream process mapping. Running a redesign event (RDE) to agree the vision of what the service and processes should look like and what needs to change to make it happen;
**Improve** – bringing the wider team together to make and test the changes needed;
**Sustain** – ensuring the changes are embedded, monitored and sustained so that the new way becomes the norm.
What support is provided by UCLH?

1. By development sessions with teams provided in the education facility at UCLH
2. Coaching and facilitation from coaches from NHS Elect or UCLH which take place on site, at the Trust and at UCLH
3. Presentations to the executive sponsor before and after the programme has been completed
4. A programme pack of course materials and tools which acts as a reference guide for teams
Benefits realised through the Productive Outpatients Programme at UCLH

One year after the Programme launch, over clinic codes and fifteen outpatient teams have completed or are undergoing the programme with many more listed to participate in future phases. Results from the pilot and first wave have evidenced quality, efficiency and productivity gains.

Some of which include;
• Average patient waiting times in clinic reduced from 105 mins to 45 mins
• Time to grade referrals has dropped from 4 days to 1 day
• Discharges have increased from 9% to 11%
• Patients and staff have reported improved experience.

Since its original conception in Spring 2011, UCLH has expanded the outpatient approach to include Productive Diagnostics and Ambulatory Care. These have been designed using similar methodologies and are in the early stages of development.
Examples of Benefits realised at UCLH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinic group</th>
<th>Results achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endocrinology</td>
<td>Patient waits reduced from 105 minutes to 45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grading time reduced from 4 days to 1 day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evidence of reduced New to Follow up ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Halved waiting times in lymphoma clinic</td>
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<td>Cancellation of unnecessary meetings – 280 additional clinic hours/ year</td>
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<td>Increased CNS role</td>
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<td>Supported move to the new Cancer Centre</td>
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<td>Multiple Sclerosis</td>
<td>Costs of MRSA screening halved (only screening admitted patients)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Patient waits reduced from 120 minutes to 73 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Therapies</td>
<td>Elimination of duplicated data entry has freed up 250 clinic hours per year</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Examples of changes we have made in participating clinics

Managing demand and capacity

- Developing accurate demand estimates to allow improved clinic templates
- Increased use of nurse led and telephone clinics
- Protocol-led discharge

Improving patient flow in clinic

- Better patient information to ensure timely arrival
- Receptionists hand out questionnaires and sample bottles
- Moving clinic rooms to be closer to diagnostics

Improving staff efficiency

- Removing duplicate data entry
- Cancelling unnecessary meetings
- Well organised working environment
Examples of changes we have made in participating clinics

“This programme is proving to be a highly successful approach for engaging staff in improving our outpatient clinics. I look forward to more and more clinics being taken through the programme so that eventually all patients and staff can feel the benefit.” Medical Director and chair of the Trust-wide outpatient efficiency group.

“The project has been a resounding success and we look forward to repeating the process and improving other clinics at Queens Square Division” Business Manager and Project Sponsor

“I really feel that this is an optimum place to work, my Clinics are well supported and as an outcome the patient quality is much improved” MS Consultant

Patients are a key part of the redesign and were invited to the redesign sessions at UCLH to participate in Focus Groups and respond to questionnaires telling us how we can improve the way we work.
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