District nurse views on improving the transfer of care from hospital to home

Delivering healthcare in people’s homes creates more choice and gives patients better access to care. This is a 2015 study into how hospital to home transfer of care is delivered in practice.

**STUDY AIMS**
To explore the views of district nurse teams:
- What are the enables and barriers to hospital to home transfer of care?

**SAMPLING**
Selective sampling applied:
- Band 6 qualified district nurses directly involved in and with a knowledge of, the transfer of care
- Three ranges of experience (1–5 years, 5–10 years, 10+ years)

**METHOD**
- Qualitative research adopted
- Six semi-structured interviews undertaken

**ANALYSIS**
- Thematic analysis implemented to identify codes, analyse and report patterns

**BARRIERS**
- Poor communication
- Lack of pre-planning
- Lack of co-ordination
- Bureaucracy hindered innovative thinking

**ENABLERS**
- Access to equipment prior to transfer of patient
- A co-location working model improved communication and pre-planning
- Discharge liaison team co-ordinating the transfer of care, particularly for end of life patients

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Map care pathways, identify gaps and improve patients’ journeys
- Strengthen co-ordination and communication between community nursing and acute providers
- Revise documentation systems and adopt a more joined-up approach
- Undertake a comprehensive review of data collection and information sharing processes
- Develop a more robust and precise method of assessing workloads and improving data recording systems
- Evaluate and clarify roles and responsibilities
- Collaborate with national organisations and research the challenges facing community nursing including specialist district nurse qualification, role dilution, staffing and new models of working
- Research and compare international models of community nursing transfer of care

**HOW THE FINDINGS CONTRIBUTED TO PRACTICE**
- Study findings shared with stakeholders (Queens’ Nursing Institute and Higher Educational Institutions)
- The nurses and operational leads involved in the study established a development group to take forward the practice based recommendations to help improve local working practices