Spreading the NEWS:

Collaborative working across the West of England to help spread the implementation of the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) to identify the deteriorating patient

Background

Recognition of the deteriorating patient is a common cause of serious adverse events and also sepsis kills 40,000 people per year in the UK. There has been a focus on the recognition of deterioration in secondary care, but less so in the pre-hospital setting. Structured observations or early warning scores are used to recognise deterioration and there are several different systems in use.
The aim of this project was to implement the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) across the healthcare system for acutely unwell patients. In 2015, all acute trusts in the West of England converted to the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) and we introduced NEWS to all healthcare settings to enable a standardised communication tool across the system. The vision is that an acutely unwell patient will have a NEWS score calculated at the point of assessment regardless of setting and that the action taken will ensure that the patient is seen at the right time in the right place by the right grade of clinician. The second year has focused on the handover between settings.

Method

We used the IHI breakthrough collaborative model to bring people together every six months from across the healthcare system. In addition, health community task groups met more frequently to lead the work where teams met under existing NHS structures. We facilitated the introduction of NEWS into the South Western Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust electronic Patient Care Record (SWAST ePCR) and helped with implementation and spread. This has been a key enabler. We have also introduced a Primary Care collaborative, an Emergency Department collaborative and a Community Collaborative to enable sectors to meet and work on patient safety problems including NEWS and the Emergency Department Safety Checklist. We have also worked with the sepsis cluster to ensure sepsis was linked with the NEWS project. In addition we have worked with band 4 healthcare providers in the community on human factors and trained them in SBAR communication. In all areas we have ensured there is a measurement strategy.

National Early Warning Score (NEWS)

NEWS is an early warning score developed by the Royal College of Physicians in 2012 using six vital signs.

Scores are associated with track and trigger systems which determine appropriate escalation for the most unwell patients.

National Early Warning Score (NEWS)

PHYSIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS	3	2	1	0	1	2	3
Respiration Rate	≤8		9 - 11	12 - 20		21 - 24	≥25
Oxygen Saturations	≤91	92 - 93	94 - 95	≥96			
Any Supplemental Oxygen		Yes		No			
Temperature	≤35.0		35.1 - 36.0	36.1 - 38.0	38.1 - 39.0	≥39.1	
Systolic BP	≤90	91 - 100	101 - 110	111 - 219			≥220
Heart Rate	≤40		41 - 50	51 - 90	91 - 110	111 - 130	≥131
Level of Consciousness				A			V, P, or U

Concern about a patient should lead to escalation, regardless of the score.

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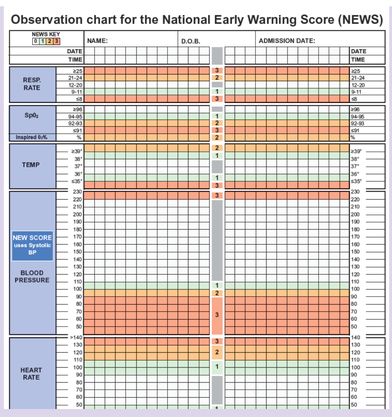
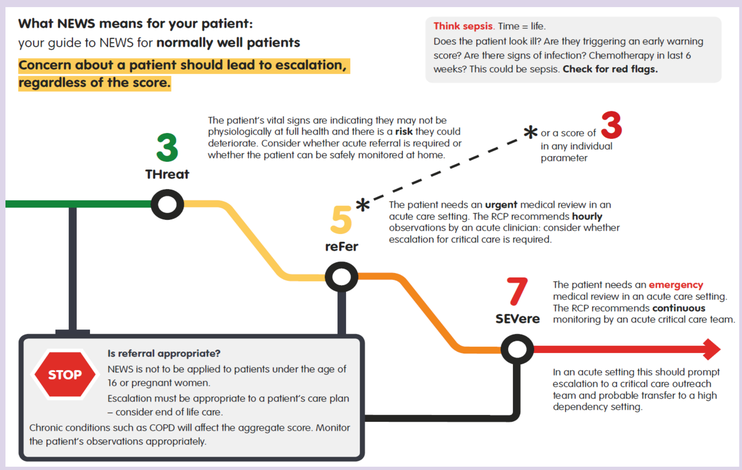




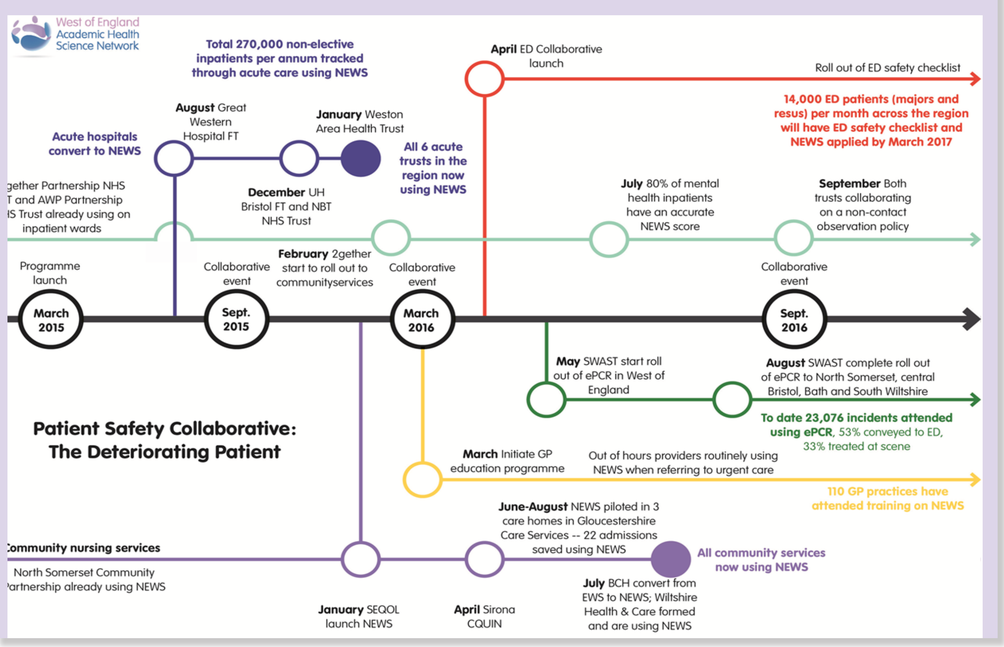
Resources

As part of the NEWS project we have developed several resources to help support the implementation of NEWS which can be found at www.weahsn.net/dp:

- NEWS toolkit
- NEWS postcard - side one shows the score table and the reverse side shows the triggers 3,5 and 7
- Posters and leaflets for communications on NEWS to staff
- Podcasts - these can be watched at - www.weahsn.net/news/patient-safety-podcasts
- Worked with EMIS and SystmOne to develop standardised electronic patient record templates which are available free of charge
- A video detailing a patient having a NEWS score from GP referral to ED and documents his early treatment and recovery - this can be downloaded at www.weahsn.net/news-film

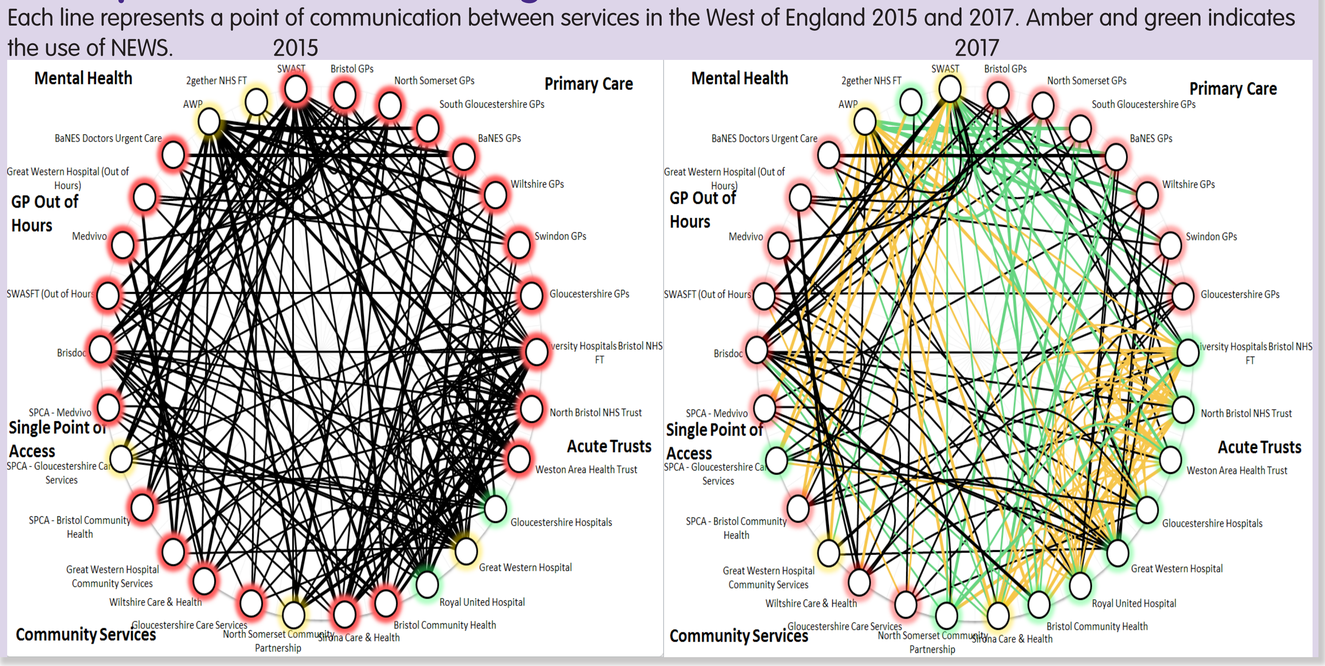
We also have our first recorded incident of a patient escalating his own NEWS and calling an ambulance.

The Impact - First Year - Introducing NEWS



The Impact - Second Year - Using NEWS at Communication

Each line represents a point of communication between services in the West of England 2015 and 2017. Amber and green indicates the use of NEWS.



Results

Acute Trusts

- All six trusts have now implemented NEWS across the West of England
- All staff undergo regular NEWS update training
- All Trusts are continously updating the charts to fit with their own policies and procedures
- Over the last two years, the two acute Trusts in Bristol have worked together to develop shared vital signs across both hospitals. The two charts have been modified considerably and now are very different
- North Bristol NHS Trust have developed a Neuro NEWS chart for use in neurology and neurosurgical areas

Community

- NEWS is being used across community in the West of England region
- GP Support unit call handlers have had training on NEWS and have started to ask for a NEWS score for referrals

Mental Health

- 80% of mental health in patients have an accurate NEWS score
- Developing a non-contact obervation policy
- Rolling out to community mental health services as well as inpatients.
- Improving accuracy of scoring on inpatients wards

Ambulance

- Introduction of ePCR across the West of England region in December 2014
- Graduated roll out over seven counties
- 347,250 patients conveyed with a NEWS score between April 2016 and March 2017

Conclusion

We have demonstrated the introduction of NEWS throughout a system but this is still work in progress. We have learnt how to make change across different health sectors and have used patient stories, toolkits and videos to provide resources for our member organisations. We have process data for all sectors and early outcome data for sepsis, which is currently being analysed. However this data is affected by many other interventions in the system. We are currently collating and analysing our outcome data to date. Our local National Institute for Health Research Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care West (CLAHRC) is undertaking a qualitative analysis and we are evaluating whether the patient pathway has been improved by the use of NEWS.

Key contacts

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