



McCartney, Elspeth and Lloyd, Susie and Gray, Alison and Smart, Kirsty (2017) Improving client transitions between SLT teams in NHSGG&C : a knowledge exchange service development project. In: Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Conference 2017, 2017-09-27 - 2017-09-28. ,

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Improving Client Transitions between SLT teams in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde: A Knowledge Exchange Project

Elspeith McCartney¹; Susie Lloyd²; Alison Gray³; Kirsty Smart³
¹University of Stirling; ²University of Strathclyde; ³NHS GG&C

The Risk

- Health policies in Scotland note a: “continuing shift in the pattern of disease towards long-term conditions, and growing numbers of older people with multiple conditions and complex needs placing changing and increasing demands on the healthcare system”ⁱ.
- Individuals with long-term speech, language, swallowing, or communication (SLSC) conditions are benefitting from increased longevityⁱⁱ, which affects their use of services, and are at risk of developing further illnesses, such as sensory impairments, dementia and stroke.
- As their health needs alter, or if acute health difficulties develop, adults who have long-term SLSC move between specialist SLT teams as they access relevant health services. Available research suggests that service users are likely to have difficulties at such transition pointsⁱⁱⁱ.

The Research

(funded by the Nancy Maxwell Memorial Bequest)

- A research project^{iv} in NHS GG&C investigated transitions across SLT teams for the range of adult service users with long-term conditions.
- It sought the views of service users and SLTs on factors that tend to facilitate or impede transitions, using critical incident techniques to identify good practice and potential difficulties.
- Results suggested that most transitions went well, but some service users and SLTs experienced difficulties at transition points.
- Analysis identified fourteen themes that comprehensively represented the data. Each had examples of negative and positive comments and of transitions rated overall as successful or less successful, suggesting they were robust constructs along which SLTs and clients evaluated transitions.
- Three over-arching themes were identified:
 - properties of SLT teams, including their roles, clients served, delivery models
 - communication and information exchange amongst SLT teams
 - outside influences on teams, including access to electronic patient records.
- Potential transition improvements were suggested.

The Knowledge Exchange Project

(Strathclyde Impact and Innovation Fund and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)

- A Knowledge Exchange project was developed between the University of Strathclyde and NHS GG&C SLTs, and formed a working group comprising: 10 SLTs covering geographical areas and specialisms in NHS GG&C; 2 SLT service managers, covering acute and community; 1 SLT from the Third Sector; 1 SLT researcher and 1 SLT Research Assistant from Strathclyde; input from a service-user representative and spouse, and eHealth advisors.
- Shared values were agreed:
 - to optimise the patient experience of services
 - to ensure the patient journey is seamless and barrier free
 - to avoid unnecessary delays in patient care
 - to ensure patients can navigate the services available.
- Outputs were the construction of:
 - a directory of relevant SLT departments and teams
 - a flowchart planning transition processes for active cases
 - a record of the transfer from planning to completion.
- As part of the knowledge exchange project, a small scale pilot was carried out in one geographical area and improvements were incorporated to reflect feedback.

Next Steps

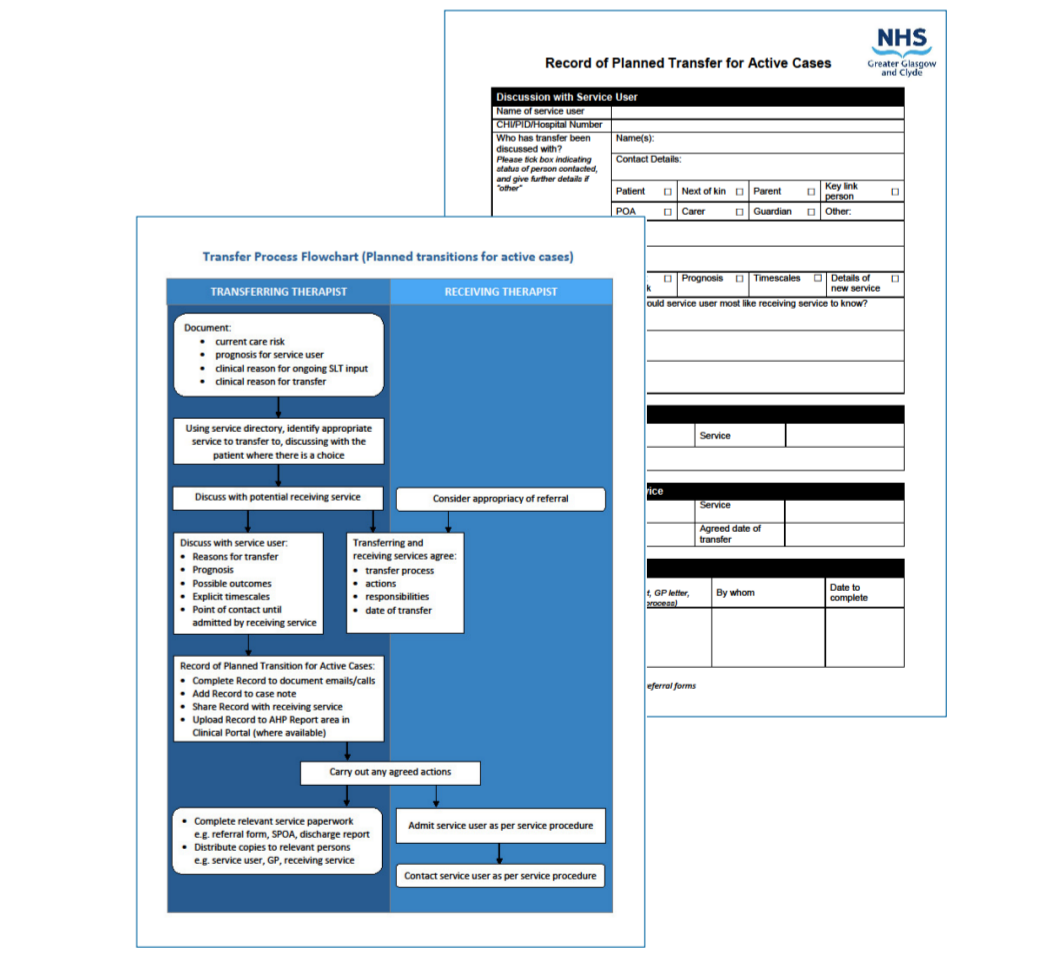
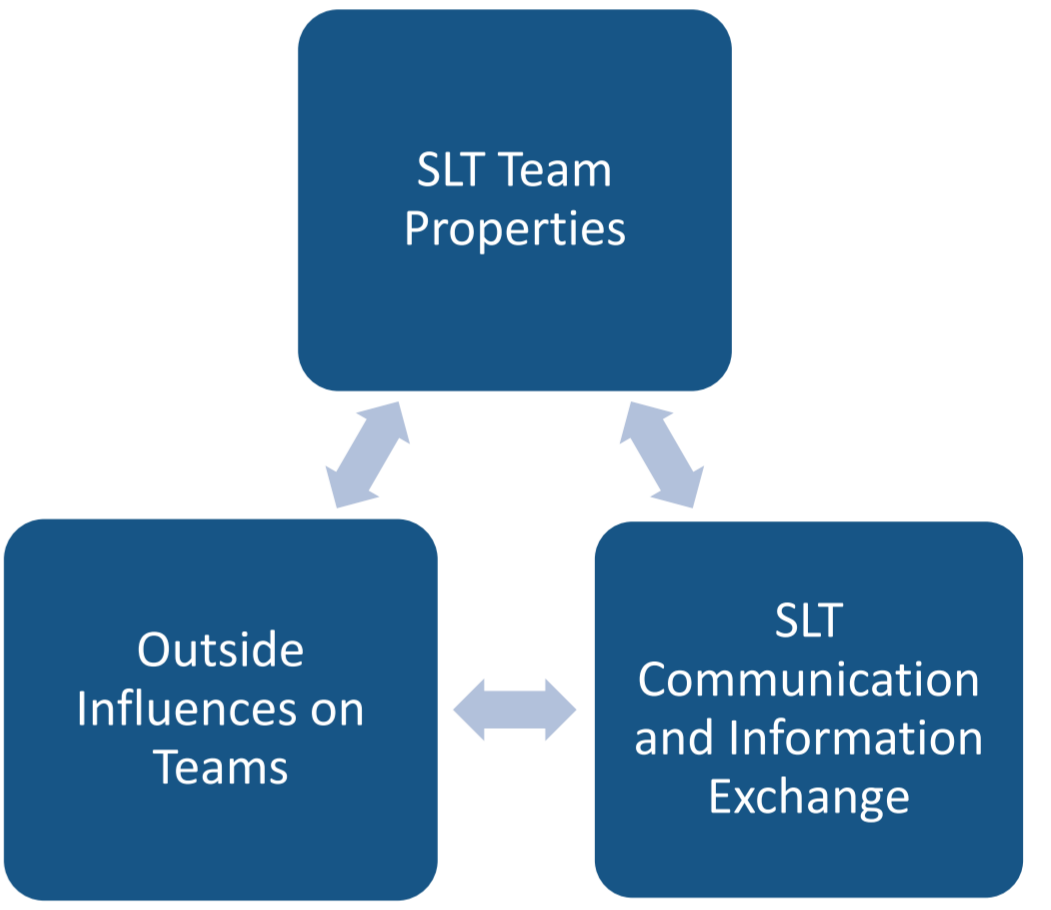
- New transitions procedures to be extended across the health board.
- The directory of SLT departments and teams to be established with maintenance and updating procedures.
- To evaluate the impact of the new procedures on the well-being of individuals with SLSC conditions.
- To investigate increased access to electronic patient records for relevant SLTs.

It's soul destroying to have to go through everything again and again each time with new people. You want to just give simple snippets of information, like 'what are the problems at the moment?'

A Service User

[I] want to know information like where am I going? Why am I going, and do they know what I need, what I'm good at and what I need help with?

A Service User



It helps with the anxiety to know in advance what's the set up.

information is power - you want to know who you can talk to if there's a problem.

The most important thing is that the lines of communication are open.

A Service User

ⁱ Scottish Government (2007) Better Health, Better Care: Action Plan > Part 4 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/11103453/4> Accessed: 6th April 2011

ⁱⁱ Holland, T. (2008). State-of-Science Review: SR-D3. Adult Intellectual (Learning) Disabilities. Foresight Review: Mental Capital and Wellbeing - Making the most of ourselves in the 21st Century. www.foresight.gov.uk Accessed: 6th April 2011

ⁱⁱⁱ Grewal, I., McManus, S., Arthur, S. Reith L. (2004) Making the transition: Addressing barriers in services for disabled people. London: Department for Work and Pensions

^{iv} McCartney, Elspeith and Muir, Margaret (2015) Improving Transitions across SLT Services in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde for Adults with Long-Term, Speech, Language, Swallowing or Communication (SLSC) Needs: a Qualitative Study of SLTs' and Service Users' Views : Moving between SLT Teams. [Report]