

'What's New' Bulletin

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One of my key responsibilities as Health Evidence Support Specialist at The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust is to take a lead on the dissemination of high quality clinical literature to NHS staff in organisations across the North Kirklees and Wakefield district. This district includes the acute hospital trust within which my post is based, three primary care trusts, a mental health trust, and NHS Direct.

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When I entered this newly created post in May 2005, it soon became clear that a key problem was the failure to effectively disseminate guidelines and evidence of best practice, across all organisations, to all grades of staff, working in all disciplines. In particular information was not reaching nurses and allied health professionals.

I had a meeting with the Health Evidence Support Specialist at Bradford & Airedale Libraries, who puts together a weekly bulletin and this inspired me to develop a similar bulletin for the trusts that I support. A weekly bulletin was too frequent, so the bulletin monthly was issued, based around the

publication date of new Guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

It is essential that members of staff are aware of NICE guidance and how it affects their practice but there were a number of problems with how the information was reaching them. Some staff had signed up for NICE email alerts only to discover that this provided them with no details of the guidance and with links that frequently didn't work on a somewhat temperamental NHS computer network. The audit department distribute NICE guidance to medical staff according to its relevance to their speciality, but this is a somewhat hit and miss procedure and medical staff were failing to pass on information to other members of the multidisciplinary team.

Following discussion with a number of clinical staff, I decided to circulate a brief summary of newly published NICE Guidance, as soon as possible after it was released. This was to help people see, at a glance, whether the guidance would require changes in their practice.

This guidance was to form the basis of the monthly 'What's New' bulletin. I quickly realised that along with sending out the NICE Guidance, there were other publications and resources that staff would find it useful.

The first bulletin, circulated in June 2005, contained clinical guidelines from NICE, SIGN and a section explaining the background to health stories which had appeared in the news based on the 'Hitting the Headlines' service provided by the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination.

The main problems experienced at this early stage were in which format to produce the bulletin and to whom to send it. It clearly wasn't feasible to produce paper copies for every ward and department in the six trusts, as there are over 300 departments in the acute trust alone. The obvious solution was to send the bulletin out via email. However, all-user emails are not permitted by the trust I work for due to past problems with junk emails so a more targeted circulation list was needed.

The first bulletin was circulated to the Chief Executive, Chief Nurse, Clinical Directors, senior nursing staff, Clinical Audit Department, and to the senior staff within my own Medical Education directorate. Those staff were asked to cascade the bulletin via email as they felt appropriate or to print out copies for their departments. Paper copies were also placed within the three libraries at the acute trust. This practice still occurs every month, and staff are invited either to read and return the bulletins or to take them away to read at their leisure.

At this early stage the bulletin was promoted in three main ways:

- Key groups – I took copies of the bulletin to every meeting and presentation that I went to (a large number as I was introducing my post to the trust) and invited interested staff to sign up to the circulation list
- Posters – promotional posters were displayed around the trusts, with contact details inviting staff to sign up

- Email – the communications team circulate a weekly email containing useful information and news from within the acute trust. I placed a small article in one of these emails, explaining the purpose of the bulletin and giving my contact details

Over the following months, the content of the bulletin increased, as I drew on more sources of information useful for staff. At present new publications and resources from the following sources are routinely included:

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)	Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN)
PRODIGY	Bandolier
Clinical Excellence	Department of Health
Healthcare Commission	King's Fund

Publications from other sources are included where they are appropriate and relevant for healthcare staff, for example, information from Department for Education and Skills or the Health & Safety Executive.

An increasingly high proportion of those on the circulation list are nurses and allied health professionals

The circulation list for the bulletin has steadily increased. In September 2005 I began automatically sending the bulletin to all consultant medical staff. One of the PCTs sends the bulletin to its entire staff increasing the circulation list by around 700. There has also been a steady stream of staff

asking to have their name added to the circulation list every month, usually within around 48 hours of the bulletin being circulated! The estimated circulation list including those who receive the bulletin from another source (i.e. by having it cascaded to them) is around 3,000.

An increasingly high proportion of those on the circulation list are nurses and allied health professionals. I have received extremely positive feedback from these service users, along with practical examples of how they are using the bulletin. For example, I send the bulletin directly to the Paediatric Practice Development Co-ordinator who is based at one of the acute hospital sites. She then selects the items that are of relevance to staff working with children and young people and forwards them on to all members of the Child Health team.

The bulletin is designed to be used by clinical staff, but I have been surprised by how many managers working in non-clinical areas, such as hospital development and HR have asked to be included on the circulation list in order to keep them up to date with developments that may have an impact on the organisation.

It is almost twelve months since I circulated the first issue of the 'What's New' bulletin and I am formally evaluating its effectiveness. There are a number of issues to consider:

- The format
- The content
- The circulation method
- The circulation list

The format of the bulletin is becoming an increasing concern as the volume of information increases every month. The bulletin circulated in May was 18 pages long which is a very long document for staff to have time to sit down and read. The bulletin has always been organised and indexed by publisher, but for the first time next month I am going to organise the content by topic. Hopefully this should help busy staff to immediately focus on the items that are directly relevant to them, leaving them to read the rest of the bulletin at their leisure.

At the moment, the content of the bulletin is entirely at my discretion but I am aware that I may be missing out information that staff would find useful or providing them with information that is irrelevant. An evaluation form will be sent out with the next bulletin, asking staff to rank the sources that they find most useful. This will enable me to focus more clearly on staff needs.

I am also interested in how much information staff would like about publications. At the moment a brief one paragraph summary of most documents is provided, with a longer summary of clinical guidance documents (such as NICE). As far as I can tell, this is in contrast to most current awareness bulletins which only provide the title and URL.

At the moment the bulletin's primary circulation method is email, with just a few paper copies being provided. This may present problems for those staff who are unable to use or do not have easy access to email. It isn't practical for me to produce and distribute any more paper copies of the bulletin as this is a very time consuming process. The bulletin is also being made

available on the Library & Information Service web pages, with a section for archived issues. This will also enable staff to access the bulletin from computers outside the NHS.

The circulation list for the 'What's New' bulletin is largely self-selecting and this limits the number of people on it. In other words, only those who actually know about the bulletin will ask to be on the circulation list.

Overall, the 'What's New' bulletin has been very successful, and seems to be achieving its main aim of getting guidance and research to the people who need it.

Current awareness: how we set up a service for the Dietitians within the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT)

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Introduction

In the summer of 2005 it was agreed that the Library Service in the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust would establish a current awareness service for a group of Allied Health Professionals within the Trust. Dietitians were identified as a suitable group because: