

Reducing AWOL from psychiatric wards

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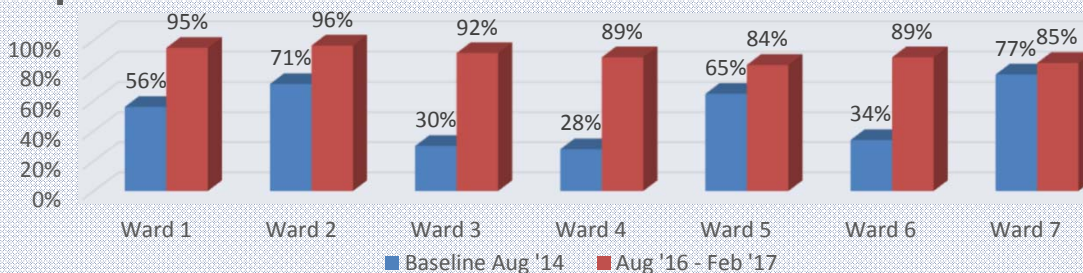
INTRODUCTION

The consequences of absconding can be catastrophic: between 2003 and 2013, 22% of inpatient suicides in England occurred following an incident of absconding from mental health wards. Absconding also puts patients at risk of self-harm, neglect and missed medication as well as causing staff and relatives stress and anxiety and impacting on police resources. Local absent-without-leave (AWOL) incidents revealed that the majority of absconding incidents on adult acute wards were cases of patients failing to return from leave rather than leaving the ward directly without permission.

AIM OF PROJECT

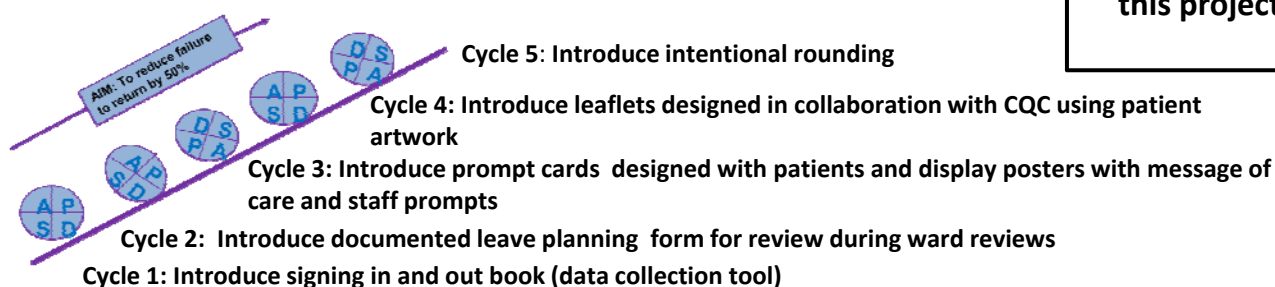
To increase the proportion of patients returning on time from leave or time away from each acute psychiatric ward by 50% in one year.

Proportion Returned On Time



**Winner of the
2017 BJN
Mental Health
Nurse of the
Year Modern
Matron
Nokuthula
Ndimande for
her work on
this project**

Methodology: 5 Tests of Change



CONCLUSION

- This QI project produced a marked and sustained improvement in patients returning on time from leave.
- All seven wards have on-time return rates of 84% or higher.
- The project has been adopted by Berkshire Healthcare NHSFT and has recently been spread to an additional two wards at Central and North West London NHSFT.

For more information on this project see:

Bailey, J. et al. (2016). Absconding: reducing failure to return in adult mental health wards. *BMJ Quality Improvement Reports*, 5(1), u209837-w5117.
The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness Annual Report 2015: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales July 2015