

REASON WHY?

Improvements are needed to internal medical flow through multiple incremental changes to processes on the wards to ease pressure on the emergency department and allow for more timely initial assessments, reduced Length Of Stay in ED and mean ambulance handover time.



- To achieve 80% of discharges before 17:00 by April 1st, 2026

PLAN

To implement and sustain daily afternoon huddles at 14:30/15:00 to support the completion and visibility of actions needed to achieve discharges before 17:00.

Most services stop at 17:00 therefore it is imperative to have all actions/tasks completed and avoid unnecessary extended length of stay.

DO

Resident doctor champions were chosen from each medicine ward to attend a weekly workstream and lead an afternoon huddle in their area.

An agenda was developed and shared with the wards.

Afternoon huddles were held between 14:00 and 15:00 across the wards.

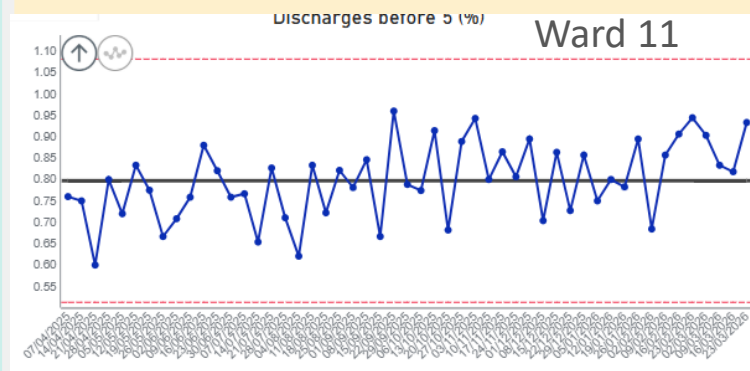
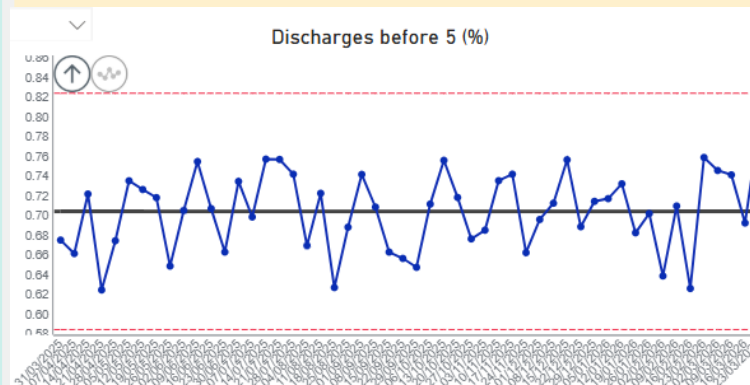
Many challenges were highlighted, including unexpected volume of clinical tasks, nurse staffing challenges, general medicine doctor rotations effecting consistency and lack of engagement from other colleagues on the ward.

Many interventions were trialed to combat the above –

- Consultants to allocate afternoon huddle lead to avoid person dependency
- Visibility of tasks/action on patient flow to reduce variation
- Ward managers to have protected time to attend
- Discharge letters to be started earlier in the patient journey

Despite this, afternoon huddles have failed to sustain consistently across the wards.

STUDY



There has been no statistical impact on the pre-17:00 discharges, however, the average has improved by 5% compared to 2024 and 10% since 2023.

There is still an inconsistent approach towards proactive discharge planning, with the volume of discharges being, prepared and planned on the day.

However, on Ward 11 where afternoon huddles have been fully adopted consistently, they have achieved an average of 80% over the past 12 months. Achieving over 85% for the past 7 weeks,

ACT

There will be a focus to implement consistent afternoon huddles, understanding the challenges and barriers specific to each ward.