Aim

Health and social care services in Scotland are unsustainable for the future. Changing demographics, advances in technology and rising public expectation require, that creative and innovative new ways are found to support people to lead prosperous, independent lives in their own communities.

The integration of health and social care in Scotland brings significant opportunity for services to review current practice and redesign services in ways which truly meet the needs of people who use them.

Releasing time to care (RTC) methodology was used to facilitate a structured approach to the integration of Occupational Therapy (OT) in East Ayrshire.

Aim of change

• To use RTC methodology to jointly identify areas for improvement.
• To ensure that any changes were based on the views and needs of people who use OT services in East Ayrshire.
• To ensure that there was opportunity for all OT staff in the partnership area to engage in, and influence the process.
• To create a truly client-centred integrated OT service.

Methods

A range of qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to seek opinion on the OT service, and inform future developments. The Scottish Health Council engaged with those who used services and their carers, using the Participation Toolkit (Scottish Health Council) and carrying out Ketso focus groups.

To capture feedback from a wider range of service users, questionnaires were used, as well as an invitation welcoming comments and feedback. Additional methodologies used to capture feedback from OT service providers included appreciative inquiry and releasing time to care – LEAN methodology.

Outcome/results

While feedback on the OT service was generally positive, some variance across the service and opportunities for improvement were highlighted.

Conclusion

As a result of the findings, ongoing service improvement work is focussing on:
• reducing waiting times;
• making it easier to access OT;
• improving transitions of care within the OT service; and
• continued engagement with all stakeholder groups, particularly around the impact of any tests of change.

References