Top Tips for spreading The Productive Ward within NHS Trusts
The challenge

In order to meet the quality and financial challenges facing the NHS it is critical that improvement programmes that have the proven potential to have a significant impact, such as The Productive Ward: Releasing time to care™ (The Productive Ward) programme, are implemented on a large-scale and as quickly as possible.

As a leader of The Productive Ward in your organisations, what can you be doing to help 'spread' the approach? How can you assess whether your organisation is ready to spread the Productive Ward? What actions should you take to overcome common barriers to the widespread adoption, implementation and spread of The Productive Ward into routine practice in your Trust?

Learning from experience

The following ‘Top Tips’ have been put together in collaboration with the sites that assisted with the recent research commissioned by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement (NHS Institute) and undertaken by the National Nursing Research Unit at King’s College London.

It is has been designed to help you as you seek to maintain momentum with your Productive Ward implementation. You might not find all the answers here, but the suggestions are based around the factors found to be most important in the research.

If you would like to find out more about the research an Executive Summary and the full report can be accessed at www.institute.nhs.uk/productiveward

Identifying readiness for implementation and spread

Knowing about the different individual, organisational and contextual factors that have shaped how The Productive Ward has spread in other NHS Trusts can help you identify important principles (or ‘key success factors’) that will help you ensure you are successful with your implementation. These factors are known to include:

- good levels of staff awareness and knowledge of The Productive Ward
- high levels of staff energy for improvement work
- good staff engagement with the aims and ethos of The Productive Ward
- the presence of dedicated and skilled Productive Ward programme leads and facilitators
- high quality of ward-level leadership
- the availability of resources for key posts and staff backfill
- a demonstrated commitment to long-term cultural change by encouraging ward staff to take ownership and make changes to their own work environment
- the integration of The Productive Ward with other improvement initiatives (eg, patient safety, High Impact Actions and patient experience)
- the integration of Productive Ward work with established reporting processes, management structures, audit processes and education programmes (including established staff/leadership development and induction programmes)
- credible champions who can lead and facilitate the work across different departments and wards
- ongoing and visible executive support to show that The Productive Ward is an organisational priority.
A quick self-assessment checklist for practitioners to see how they are doing and some tips for spread

The following checklist has brought together the key findings from the research with insights from NHS staff who have been leading the implementation of The Productive Ward in their organisations. It provides a ‘starter for 10’ for Productive Ward leads and facilitators to help guide your thinking about actions you may need to take locally to encourage the spread of The Productive Ward in your Trust:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Tried and tested tips from NHS staff for spreading The Productive Ward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Have you connected The Productive Ward with the wider political and social agendas facing your Trust?** | • Being able to explicitly link Productive Ward work with for example, Lean, Six Sigma or other local change initiatives, must be seen as both a benefit and strength of the programme. Be explicit about how The Productive Ward can be a very valuable initiative to tackle the quality and productivity challenges facing all NHS organisations.  
  • Look for catalytic and ‘piggy-back’ events for promoting and spreading The Productive Ward and winning support from internal and external stakeholders. |
| Aligning The Productive Ward with other key objectives for your Trust (for example, increased patient safety, more cost-efficient services) will help you to secure resources and support. |                                                                                                                                    |
| **Do you understand the needs and characteristics of those staff throughout your Trust who you hope will adopt the Productive Ward?** | • Be aware of the importance of ‘framing to fit’- telling ‘The Productive Ward story’ in a way that appeals to and resonates with the values, sentiments and goals of key audiences.  
  • Prioritise securing ward-level leadership and ‘buy in’ as being essential for securing the vision of the programme and meeting goals; sustained staff ownership of the work is crucial. Ward managers occupy a key position in channels of communication for spread.  
  • Incentives and rewards are still among the most powerful ways of getting innovation adopted and spread; these can be financial or non-financial. |
| Ensuring that the meaning of the Productive Ward is clear to staff framed in a way which resonates with them, and that their decision to adopt the programme is made as simple as possible will help implementation and spread. |                                                                                                                                    |
| **Are you engaging relevant staff in your Trust at all stages?** | • Before launching The Productive Ward in your organisation spend a period of time in a Trust where the programme has been implemented to get a good understanding of what is required. Start to create a buzz in your organisation. Get everyone involved and signed up even if their involvement is minimal.  
  • Make the most of available support. Be open and ask for help; don’t be afraid to draw on support and advice from |
<p>| For example, in developing your local approach and early piloting. Make sure you have access to key people in |                                                                                                                                    |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you engaging respected individuals in your Trust?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To champion The Productive Ward programme identify change agents and use them to spread a clear message about the learning from the programme in your organisation. Also use networks both inside your organisation and within your area to spread The Productive Ward message.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you providing clear information about the benefits of The Productive Ward?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlight the potential for The Productive Ward in terms of the potential to transform the lives of patients and staff. Also be clear about how the programme can contribute to achieving efficient use of resources and the vital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>your organisation that can support implementation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the NHS Institute (including study days, networks and colleagues, and Productive Ward documentation – visit <a href="http://www.institute.nhs.uk/productiveward">www.institute.nhs.uk/productiveward</a>).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Train key staff in your Trust in the principles and techniques of The Productive Ward in order to get wider staff involvement and engagement.
- Ward staff involvement and motivation is imperative to the success of The Productive Ward programme. Ensure each module is lead by a different member of staff and include non-qualified staff in leading activities. Involve junior staff from the outset.
- When planning to implement The Productive Ward start with a few wards that want to complete the project then scale-up when appropriate; invite wards to compete for “showcase” status.
- Encourage staff on wards to make suggestions; they work in the clinical area and can evaluate if changes are effective, do not impose ideas on them. Choose some projects that produce quick wins. Link activities to your everyday work. Be willing to discuss everyone’s ideas and work as a team.
- Acknowledge ownership and celebrate successes. Share learning across wards and departments, track improvements in patient experience, use staff and patient stories as powerful tools, make use of multi-disciplinary teams and other existing staff groups to spread the learning.

- Have an identified leader who is going to actively take charge and who knows what they are doing so that they can communicate this to other members of the team.
- Have a dedicated Productive Ward team who will be given time to take this programme forward and who are trained on how to develop and spread it.
- Identify champions for The Productive Ward - draw on individuals who are able to motivate others and are willing to explain each stage and key information in simple terms.
- Find local Productive Ward champions and leaders and empower them to take responsibility for getting their particular professional colleagues throughout the organisation on board (the ‘homophily’ principle that like recruits like).

- Communicate widely and regularly; gain ongoing senior management support by starting the ‘Visit Pyramid’ and set dates for ward visits. Maintain weekly meetings, type up action notes and present results.
- Concentrate on delivering the core modules first; these will provide a foundation for improvement. Ensure you address ‘Knowing How We Are Doing’ first and get as much baseline data as possible before making any improvement. Take the time to capture evidence and data of where you are now and think about what tools you are going to use to measure improvement and to ensure sustainability.
- Encourage members of ward teams to share information and learning amongst their peers on other wards. Often it
contribution that front line staff can make.  

appears that there is a lack of structure for spreading information amongst colleagues working at the same level elsewhere in an organisation and an over-reliance on formal, hierarchical communication which can act as a barrier to the natural spread of the work through informal channels.

- Capture evidence of efficiency and cost improvements brought about by Productive Ward work in order to secure future resources for the programme. You can do this using the Productive Module Impact Framework tool found at www.institute.nhs.uk/pmif
- Avoid drowning in detail by focusing on key aspects of care/core measures/dashboards; measure only what is genuinely meaningful and helpful and then use it!
- Focus on building a distinct identity for The Productive Ward that staff can relate to and value, including perhaps an image that ‘badges’ and brands the work and establishes its unique selling point and attracts attention and support in the wider organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you providing clear information about the operational attributes of the Productive Ward?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be clear with staff about operational goals, usefulness, feasibility and stages of implementation, and what type of knowledge is required to achieve sustained change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Set a realistic time scale. Take your time and do not rush. Take small steps and complete them before moving on to the next. The project plan should take into consideration school holidays and busy clinical times.
- Establish robust project management processes but avoid the heavy-handed administrative structures that take away the energy, enthusiasm and resilience of those involved, and subject the innovation to death by project management.
- Explain that whilst The Productive Ward was originally designed to assist front line staff to release time to give enhanced care to their patients, it also allows clinicians to re-design their care processes so they are able to make informed decisions about where care and investment should be preserved and where it should be removed by eliminating waste.
- Be clear from the outset that the work is not aimed at step-by-step progression towards the ‘completion’ of the programme (a ‘tick-box’ exercise) but rather about embedding the work and ways of thinking into the ‘things we do around here’ on a routine, day-to-day basis (a process of continuous improvement leading to lasting cultural change).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you examined the organisational context in your Trust?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that The Productive Ward is embedded in the organisational structure of your organisation. Utilise your Executive team and existing structures to ensure strong governance of the programme and identify existing skills that you may</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- You will need strong and consistent support from your executive team by, for example, ensuring staff can be released to participate; your organisation needs to make it a high priority in practice, not just in principle. Get your managers behind you. Set up a steering group; bear in mind that you may need board-level interventions to get things done.
- Secure dedicated resources, negotiate with senior management for release and cover of staff to do the work. If it is possible, release backfill money for certain roles. Set up accounting systems for expenditure. If you are able to secure additional resource, put them in place prior to starting the programme.
| have in your organisation that can assist you with implementation. | • Adjust your expectations to match the situation - don’t be frustrated if progress isn’t as quick as you wanted. Set clear goals, but don’t be afraid to move deadlines as long as there is still a flow of activity and things being achieved.  
• Knowledge and skills in change management are important and help adaptation of The Productive Ward modules and materials to local contexts.  
• Embed successful solutions from The Productive Ward into organisational policies and standard operating procedures, as a standing item on meeting agendas and monitoring systems helps to sustain improvements. |

For further information about the evidence supporting this guide please see Morrow E, Robert G, Maben J and Griffiths P. (2010) Improving healthcare quality at scale and pace. Lessons from The Productive Ward: Releasing time to care