

CLAHRCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

Evaluating a real-time feedback app to improve staff engagement



Evidence shows that NHS organisations deliver better care when staff engagement is high, staff are strongly committed to their work and are involved in decision-making.

The Staff Participation Engagement and Communication application (SPEaC-app), also known as Happy App by staff from University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust (UH Bristol), collects real-time, work-related mood feedback.

It was the brainchild of Anne Frampton, Consultant in Emergency Medicine, and Andrew Hollowood, Clinical Chair, both at UH Bristol, and developed by software

designer Christopher Smith-Clarke.

CLAHRC West was research and evaluation partner on the project to develop and roll out the app across the trust.

The app collects data from staff about problems and frustrations, as well as positive experiences. Staff can use the app at dedicated terminals. They can express how they are feeling anonymously.

Local managers, such as ward leaders or matrons, can access this information and address the issues it raises. They can share these issues with senior managers so action can be taken quickly and effectively to prevent more serious problems.

Project aims

The first stage evaluated the initial trial period, where the app was in use in two departments at the trust. The project team worked to improve staff uptake and interaction with the app, by developing it to meet the needs of the end users through a series of workshops and data analysis.

The research aimed to find out if the app was having a positive impact on staff engagement and patient experience. The overall aim was to see if the app is effective as an early warning tool to identify potential problems with patient flow and quality of care. This would give staff the opportunity to intervene early to address issues before they escalate.

What we did

Usage data analysis explored how often staff used it, the number of posts they made and the reasons for these posts. The team also evaluated staff satisfaction with the app and the challenges and successes of using the app in different clinical areas, through workshops and an online survey.

What we found

The evaluation has shown that there have been real improvements in engagement locally between managers and their teams. It has inspired improvements in service

delivery. On average the app was used by staff 15 times a day in each of the 23 clinical areas. Almost half the entries were positive and related to good teamwork.

Access to the app, location of the terminals, reliability and perceived privacy were all important factors affecting whether staff used it. It was valued and used most in areas where staff got regular and rapid feedback from leaders and comments were acted upon, leading to change. This suggests that strong, consistent local management is needed to establish it in new areas.

SPEaC-app has the potential to support local engagement between managers and their service delivery teams, stimulate improvements in service delivery and support the process of change. We need longer term data to find out whether SPEaC-app can influence other factors such as staff recruitment and retention.



Read the paper

Using real-time, anonymous staff feedback to improve staff experience and engagement

Anne Frampton, Fiona Fox, Andrew Hollowood, Kate Northstone, Ruta Margelyte, Stephanie Smith-Clarke, Sabi Redwood

bit.ly/SPEaC-app

Find out more

clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/SPEaC-app/

Contact CLAHRC West

0117 342 1262

clahrcwest@nihr.ac.uk