

Impact of Pre-operative appointments in Hand Therapy for Plastic Hand Trauma Patients, at Northampton General Hospital (NGH)

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INTRODUCTION

At NGH Plastic Surgery manage all soft tissue hand trauma. All post-operative patients are referred to Hand Therapy and are required to be seen within our target date of 3-5 days post-op in line with the British Association of Hand Therapy (BAHT) and The British Society for Surgery of the Hand (BSSH) guidelines. Within our service this patient group has a high DNA rate, especially for initial appointments. As a result this often causes delay to care, breach to target date and as a result, an increase in complications.

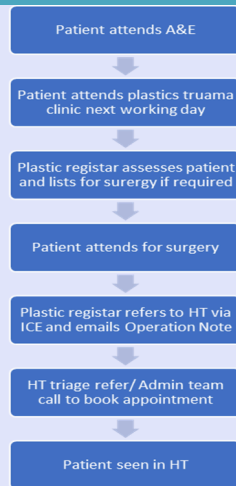
PROJECT AIMS

- Improve patient pathway
- Reduce DNA's
- Improve patient experience
- Improve patient outcomes
- Assess sustainability
- Working towards NHS commitment of Net Zero

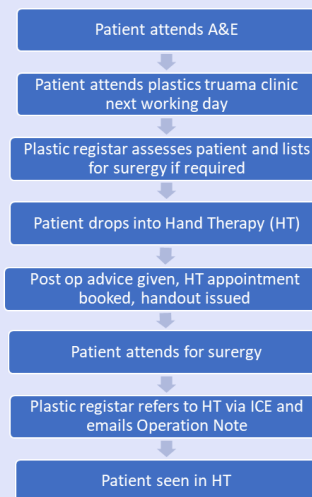
METHOD

- Sample selection: all new post-op Plastic Surgery patients with hand injuries. Pre-change: patients referred in April 2024. Post change: patients referred in September 2024 (sample size 10 each)
- Change was measured against: patient outcomes, environmental, economic, and social sustainability factors
- Data collected: total number of appointments, DNAs, breach of 3-5day target, additional appointments, total dressings cost
- Pre-op appointments were facilitated by band 7 Hand Therapists
- Patient triage, allocation of appointment and clinical care was not affected by this process (patients were treated by band 6 or 7 hand therapists).
- Continuity of care was maintained where service provision allowed.

PRE CHANGE PATHWAY



POST CHANGE PATHWAY



OUTCOMES



- Reduction of 43.6% HT appointments
- Reduction of 54.5% consultant appointments
- Reduction of 52% of DNAs in HT
- Reduction of 76% of patients breaching target date



- Reduction in HT appointments was projected to save NGH £669,075 annually
- Reduction of consultant appointments was projected to save NGH £80,150 annually
- Stock reduction projected to save £349 annually



- Saved HT appointments = 276kg CO2e saved
- Reduction in consultant appointments = 990kg CO2e saved
- Anticipated annual saving of 22651kg CO2e = driving 66896 miles in an average car!



"Everyone should be aware of environmental impact. Any effort to be sustainable is a good effort" **Patient**

Friends and Family test: Improved from 92% to 97.5% 'Very good'

"I am very impressed with the Co2/sustainability data."

Staff member - Consultant

CONCLUSION

The impact of this small process change, which required minimal disruption to service, had a significant positive impact on patient experience, and created a more efficient use of NHS resources and a reduction of CO2e. The small sample size limits the data and therefore may not be representative when scaled. This project had minimal challenges but one was maintaining process during high clinical demand. lucy.wimmer@nhs.net

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