

Devon Yellow Card

Sam Holden

Quality Assurance and Patient Experience Lead

@samuelholdenNHS @sdtccg @NEWDevonCCG

NHS Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
NHS South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group

Devon CCGs

The two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Devon are responsible for commissioning health services for a population of over 1 million people. With both extreme rurality, urban areas and 2 cities, Devon has some unique challenges when it comes to commissioning health services that meet the needs of the entire population.

Recently the two CCGs have begun to work much more closely together under the Devon Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP). The two nursing and quality teams effectively work across the whole of Devon covering Safety, Clinical Effectiveness, Infection Control, Experience and risk across the system.

Summary

Yellow Card was developed originally in the South Devon and Torbay area as a direct response to General Practitioners who were saying that they could not feed back about parts of the system that weren't working for them. GPs wanted a simple way of highlighting these areas to commissioners to improve efficiency, safety and experience of both patients and staff.

The initial system was paper based, relying on the GP or surgery to fill in a form and post this to the CCG – this was clunky, time consuming and administratively difficult to manage. The quality of the information submitted varied greatly and the process nearly faltered.

Yellow Card Development

The development of Yellow Card then moved to a computer programme, this was still not ideal as it required a secure connection and a password which meant that it was still not able to be used as freely as we wanted and it did not allow people to use it outside of an NHS connection.

We started to look at an off the shelf solution but found a lot of these to be hugely costly and not really what we wanted in terms of flexibility of use.

With this in mind, with the development of the new CCG website we decided to build it ourselves into a page on the website, this allowed for much more flexibility, no password was required and it could be used wherever someone had an internet connection.

Yellow Card Development

Once the system was web based it allowed us to think about how to expand the system further than just general practice.

Initially working with 4 key system areas, General Practice, Acute Services, Community and District Nursing and Pharmacy. These were key stakeholders in the development of the early web based Yellow Card system.

This ensured buy-in and collaboration which in turn ensured its success in using Yellow Card across the Devon system.

Future Success

As the use of the system expands across Devon we would like to see Yellow Card used as a barometer for system pressures and to be used in a more proactive way to prevent system issues before they get bigger.

We would like to see the use of Yellow Card built into formal contracts with providers in the same way as formal incident reporting is and monitor its usage via KPIs. We are exploring the introduction of Yellow Card champions within organisations to highlight and promote the use of the system within their own organisation. The key to its success is by telling people what has been done with their feedback and describing changes made as a result, we would like to see a dedicated web page on each CCG website with case studies, videos and measures of success so that Healthcare professionals can see that their feedback can and does make a difference. Because the system costs nothing to use or implement there is no financial requirement from other organisations in order for them to use the system.

Relevance to Other Groups

Yellow Card has been well received by local providers and largely through word of mouth the system has gathered local and regional interest. We have recently worked with our local Healthwatch to seek their feedback via Yellow Card around parts of the system they experience. NHS England regionally now receive a Yellow Card report about services they commission quarterly via their primary care quality and sustainability hub and they use the information to build into their intelligence gathering about services they commission. The Local Medical Committee and the Local Pharmacy Committee are also helping to promote the system widely and now receive the quarterly newsletter. Alongside this, regular reports are sent to the CQC for them to build into intelligence gathering that they use.

We have begun early discussions with Kernow CCG about using Yellow Card in their area; this is valuable to us because some patients in Devon use services in Cornwall and patients in Cornwall use some Devon services

What Makes it Stand Out

This initiative has been successful for many reasons, from the start we worked with providers to understand what would work for them so as not to unduly increase workload.

We made the form easy and simple to use whilst at the same time capturing the essential information we needed. The team managing the system are responsive to feedback and issues that may arise with the use of Yellow Card.

Because it is free to use, requires no installation, no password and no special equipment we have removed many of the barriers that could have existed to prevent its use and further roll out. We offer face to face training and support for its use which is invaluable to providers seeking to use Yellow Card within their organisation.

Key Learning Points

Key learning points to consider would be

- Ensure that the system is as easy and simple to use as possible so as not to increase workload on healthcare professionals.**
- Spend time, at least initially, meeting face to face with organisations to demonstrate the system and dispel myths.**
- Ensure that regular, timely and responsive feedback about what has changed as a result is essential so the people feel that it is worthwhile feeding back.**
- Adopt a 'You Said We Did' approach**