

Video-Conference Schwartz Round between three sites of an Acute Hospital Trust

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University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay FT (UHMB) is a medium sized acute Foundation Trust with three main hospital sites. We run two acute sites in Lancaster and Barrow in Furness and another hospital in Kendal where elective surgery and many other out-patient services are delivered. UHMB has been running Schwartz Rounds since August 2015. It has been difficult to find enough volunteers to participate as panel members to run monthly Schwartz Rounds at each site and often provisionally booked rounds have been cancelled. There has been greater attendance at one site where the Rounds have been better established and we needed to increase the profile of Schwartz Rounds on the other sites. In September 2017 we piloted a video-conferenced Schwartz Round between all three hospital sites.



It took considerable time and effort on behalf of the Education Centre staff to ensure that suitable rooms were available on all three hospital sites for the lunchtime meeting. Whilst video-conferencing is increasingly used within our Trust for MDT meetings it is not frequently used for three way meetings. A week before the actual Round a trial run was conducted to ensure the technology worked correctly. It was necessary to have three facilitators, one for each site and to agree how to control the discussion after the panel members had presented. We had a panel of three members of staff with one panel member present on each site.

'The Challenges and Rewards of Cross Bay Working'

This was appropriately the title of the first video-conference Schwartz Round. Many of our staff work on all three sites which can involve considerable amounts of travelling with consequently early starts and long working days. It was interesting that all three panel members had similar reflections despite working in very different areas of the Trust. A lack of visibility to staff was a common frustration despite their best efforts to maintain a presence regularly on each site. Travelling was unexpectedly a positive reflection with the hour plus drive providing some quiet time with the opportunity to think things through away from the hectic workplace.



Feedback comments included:

'Excellent—need more of the same'

'Good experiment with video conferencing—obviously will be teething problems but should persevere'

We feel that our pilot of a video-conference Schwartz Round was successful. However on reflection the Steering Group realised that it had taken a huge amount of admin support and time in preparation and on the day. We do not intend that all Schwartz Rounds will be conducted in this way but intend to repeat it at least once a year.