

Ten key messages for Safety Improvement Plans

1. **What is it?** A safety improvement plan is one document [with a number of sections] which sets out the strategic direction for safety for an organisation and describes the key areas of activity that will be concentrated on for the next 3-5 years. This document can be used to demonstrate to the public what the organisation is doing, as well as to the relevant Academic Health Science Network to align with the patient safety collaboratives and can be used to demonstrate to any oversight body what the organisation is doing in safety. The sections should include; context, leadership, analysis, measurement, patient engagement and bid for NHS LA monies.
2. **Local ownership:** Each NHS organisation decides what should be in their plan. NHS organisations work on what they want to do, not what someone else wants them to do. This is derived from a detailed analysis of the levels of harm in their organisation as well as listening exercises with their staff and patients in order to prioritise the activities in their plan.
3. **Staff engagement:** NHS organisations are asked to engage their staff so that their commitment is gained rather than generating simple compliance. Listening to staff on the frontline provides a rich source of safety intelligence, especially those that move around the system frequently such as doctors in training. Building clinical engagement is vital; gaining buy in so that all staff feel the initiative contributes and adds value towards their work.
4. **Create the right culture:** The plans should all support a positive, open and fair (often referred to as 'just') culture which is a key issue the campaign is promoting.
5. **Ensure we represent the patient voice appropriately:** The plans should describe how they will involve patients in designing safer care and the measuring and monitoring of patient safety at organisational level. Organisations that join the campaign are asked to seek out the patient and carer voice as an essential asset in monitoring the safety and quality of care and to commit to developing a safety briefing for patients. This will be explored over the period of the campaign as to what the most effective mechanisms could be for patient briefing. For example patient videos can have significant potential to empower patients in the safety and quality of their care. However, it is important to note that efforts to implement patient safety films in practice need to consider different patient groups' needs and characteristics rather than trying to adopt 'a one size fits all' approach. It is suggested therefore that participants think about the best way to do this in their organisation for their patients. This may be a video or it could be another mechanism such as a leaflet or face to face briefing on admission.
6. **Simplicity and focus on doing a few things well:** Participants are asked to focus on a few interventions – i.e. working on a few things, doing them well and fixing them before moving on. Focus on things that matter to those who will be implementing them and their patients.
7. **Learn from and build on the past:** The plans should reflect on what has worked and what didn't work in the past to create the foundations for a continuous learning culture across the NHS.
8. **Ensure a strong focus on effective measurement for improvement:** The plans all must have a measurement section which states exactly what they are trying to achieve and by when. The changes should be easy to use and easy to adopt, possible to test on a small scale, and adapt to local conditions.
9. **Alignment:** Where possible the topic themes derived from the personalised safety improvement plans (as part of the sign up to safety campaign) should feed into the safety collaboratives. Those that don't will require separate networking and support.
10. **Numbers:** We have had just under 90 draft plans submitted for feedback – the vast majority from acute care (71) and with the aim of bidding for monies from the NHS LA. This has led to the creation of 8 examples of plans to share across the NHS. The deadline for the NHS LA is 16 January 2015.