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Caring call reaches patients in their home

Caring for patients is what our staff do best at Fairfield Hospital. When patients left the ward staff often wondered how their patients were getting on at home and that they were safe.

To bridge that gap, Ward 2B Nurse Unit Manager, Lianne Gray, said the hospital introduced a new follow up phone call initiative that supports patients following discharge, ensuring a safe transition from hospital to home.

These phone calls are now utilised across the South Western Sydney Local Health District as part of the Transforming Your Experience strategy.

“We started with patients who had undergone joint replacements because they were being sent home with medication and other instructions,” she said.

“Even though the instructions were on paper or written on the box, we came up with the idea of a discharge summary that was nursing driven.

“We would hand out our ward phone number to patients so they could call us direct when they got home and had any questions.”

It had simple education included on the nursing discharge summary but the team wanted to develop it even further which is when phone calls were introduced.

“We put a lot of work into the patients when they are here, but we wanted to make sure they were looking after themselves when they got home,” Mrs Gray said.

The 2B team run through a script when they call patients within a couple of days after being discharged and, in the last month alone, have called almost 300 people.

“Momentum is gathering because our team sees the benefit of a simple follow-up phone call. The entire team shares the load when it comes to making phone calls; if everyone does it, it’s one call each.

“Knowing the patient has gone home and is safe is at the heart of this initiative.

“And, some of the older patients who don’t have a lot of family support enjoy the fact they’ve got someone to talk to for a few minutes.”

Transforming Your Experience is a five-year strategy which supports staff to work together to consistently deliver safe, quality care and positively transform how our patients, consumers, staff and communities experience our organisation and services.