

The following tips have been sent in from patients & visitors (pts) representing the US-PEx Lay Panel. Use, choose, add & adapt....

Where do I find people who are willing to get involved?

A: start by looking around your own ward & don't be afraid to ask patients & visitors – the worst that can happen is they say 'no'. Or put up a poster or see if your hospital has a list of volunteers you might approach. Perhaps add a question to the admission form & for pts to leave contact details.

If they say No should I ask again?

A: why not? If they say 'no' again it may just have been the wrong time to ask. If they say no again direct them to the suggestion box/book.

Suggest the Suggestion Box

It may seem old fashioned but a box or book on the ward where pts and visitors can write suggestions either anonymously or named will act both as a great source of tips but also will enable you to identify the pts/visitors who are willing to get involved in ward improvement.

You Said – We Did...

The suggestions you get in the box/book can be translated into a wall chart or journal where you said what suggestions were put into practice and the reasons why some are not. This not only shows action but also enables you to keep a record of improvements and involvement.

3 Ps....Patient Partners Pool

Once you've found some willing pts/visitors to get involved try and build up a pool of pts/visitors, if you have a patient involvement lead at the hospital they may already have a pool you can use to find people. If not don't let that stop you creating your own. Perhaps promote through local community groups such as church or patient groups. See if it's ok to keep contact details after discharged so that you can invite them back to work together on ward improvement and also to show off what you have done. They will become great ambassadors for you.

3 Ss....Simple Straightforward Solutions

Your Trust does not have to be running a pt/public involvement pool, you don't need to market and advertise. To get started all you need is to be willing to approach people, be keen to involve pts/visitors and recognize the benefits of working together on improvements. Be open, flexible and look around at who you know to be approachable, the pts who have made suggestions, the visitors and pts who've sent you cards & don't be afraid to ask the more critical ones.