Introduction:
The transfer of patients from the intensive care unit (ICU) to the general wards is a challenging transition of care. This project focused on the handover of patients between ICU and the general wards in a district general hospital where there was no formal handover system in place. A baseline survey found 100% of foundation year 1 (FY1) doctors felt medications were unclear when rewriting ICU drug charts from the electronic notes. Junior doctors were often unaware patients had been transferred. This resulted in significant delays in drug charts being rewritten and missed or delayed medications. Our aim was to reduce the median time delay in drug charts being rewritten by 50% in 4 months.

Methods:
Following discussion with ICU staff, ward staff and FY1 doctors, a formal standardised handover system was introduced. This involved a verbal handover to the appropriate FY1 by an ICU doctor and the patient drug chart to be rewritten in ICU at the time of handover. The next change was to display posters on the wards to alert staff that the medical team are to be contacted when a patient comes to the ward from ICU and to ensure the drug chart is completed.

Results:
The baseline data showed a median time delay of 4 hours, with one patient waiting 14 hours for a drug chart. Following the interventions the median time delay has decreased to 0 hours within 4 months as demonstrated in figure 1. The changes have received positive feedback from ICU staff, ward staff and FY1 doctors.

Conclusion:
The aim of reducing the time delay by 50% has been achieved with the median time delay now 0 hours. This has improved patient safety by significantly reduced delays in medications and through the introduction of a standardised handover. This has also provided an opportunity for junior doctors on the wards to seek clarification regarding medications and the clinical management plan for the patient. This has established a communication channel between ICU and the wards making patient care safer and more effective.

Image :

![Run chart showing time delay in rewriting ICU drug chart in patients being discharged from ICU](image-url)

*Figure 1*