



Improving together

Gloves off to improve patient safety and experience

A campaign to reduce the unnecessary use of disposable gloves has been introduced to the Critical Care Unit at the Great Western Hospital.

Focused training and education has led to a 20 per cent reduction in glove use in a three-month period, leading to potential savings of £1,400 a year and preventing 1.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions.

Gloves Off emphasises proper hand hygiene over the routine use of gloves, which create a false sense of security, advocating for their use only when clinically necessary.

There are multiple benefits to the quality of patient care, environmental sustainability, and efficiency. Alongside improved hand hygiene and a reduced risk of cross-contamination between patients, Gloves Off impacts patients' comfort and trust in healthcare professionals.

The team used Improving Together to explore the problem using A3 Thinking and Go and Sees, and a multidisciplinary team effort helped to ensure everyone understood the changes needed.

An audit revealed a third of care included the inappropriate use of gloves, while proper hand hygiene after removing gloves only happened in 20 per cent of cases.

Hands-on teaching was introduced, while posters were displayed by patient beds with examples of when and when not to wear gloves.

After just three months of the Gloves Off campaign seven per cent of care included the inappropriate use of gloves and proper hand hygiene was observed in 90 per cent of cases after removing gloves.

Staff now feel more empowered to make decisions about when gloves are needed, enhancing their role in infection, prevention and control.