Scott Deacon, Clinical Director of the Cleft Network at Bristol Dental Hospital, relays his experience of how presenting his poster, ‘Take Phonership’, gave the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust a renewed energy to take the project further.

Scott’s team at Bristol Dental Hospital created an initiative to help tackle what had been a growing issue for the organisation; an avalanche of phone calls. The hospital was receiving nearly 5,000 calls a week and due to resourcing issues, was failing to answer nearly half of them. This led to an up-take in complaints from patients.

As Scott would show in his poster at the Leaders in Healthcare conference, the team implemented a number of initiatives under the banner of ‘taking phonership.’ These included looking to new technologies, educating different departments and ultimately, ensuring that answering the phone became a hospital-wide responsibility. In just 12 months, the initiative dramatically improved engagement with patients and those seeking student appointments.
Q&A with Scott Deacon

What tips would you offer to anyone who is planning on presenting a poster at next year’s conference?

“Don’t be afraid to approach people and start chatting to them! Get to know what their poster is about and get them engaged with yours. Because actually, people are generally very interested in what you’ve got to show. You just have to be a little proactive. Leaders in Healthcare is a really great platform and provides an excellent culture to showcase your work. It’s a broad conference in terms of who goes, so you have to be prepared to put yourself out there.”

What’s happened since you presented your poster? Have there been any further developments back in Bristol?

“As a result of coming to the Leaders in Healthcare conference and presenting, I’ve been invited to do some trust-wide project-based work to embed the initiative within other departments. Overall, it’s had a positive knock-on effect.”

How have you used the poster in another context?

“We were able to use the poster to do positive communications within the trust and at the hospital. It made them feel like the effort they’d put in was being seen externally and by other people, showcasing some positive aspects of the hospital. It also helped staff to re-engage with the process. We’ve also been adopted as part of a larger project in the Quality Improvement Department across the whole trust!”

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