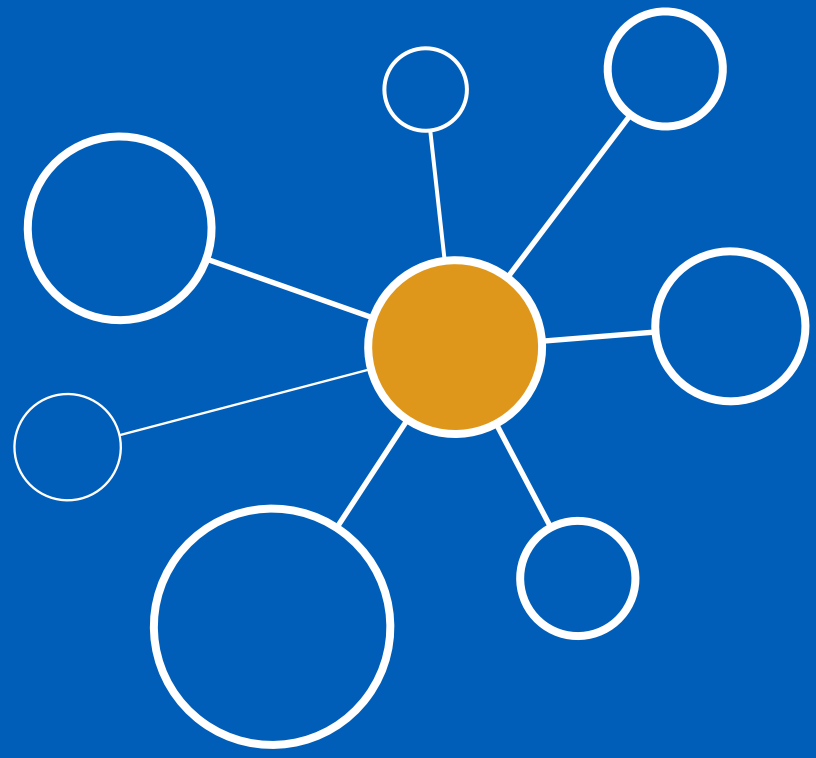


Gloucestershire Safety and Quality Improvement Academy 2025

Martha's Rule Implementation

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Martha's Rule was established in memory of Martha Mills, a 13-year-old girl who tragically died from sepsis in 2021 following a delay in recognising the severity of her condition. Despite her parents' repeated concerns about her deterioration, their worries were not acted upon in time. An independent investigation concluded that her death was avoidable and highlighted serious communication and escalation failures. Martha's Rule aims to ensure that patients, families, and staff can raise concerns about a patient's condition and trigger a prompt clinical review. It provides a formal mechanism for escalation when people feel their concerns are not being heard, promoting a culture of safety, openness, and responsiveness across healthcare settings. At Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, we began piloting the implementation of Martha's Rule in the Hatherly Ward (HASU) to test and refine processes before a wider trust-wide rollout.



AIM

To fully embed the EPR flowchart questions, "Are you concerned about the patient?" and "How does the patient feel?", into routine practice on the Hatherley Ward (HASU), achieving 50% compliance within six months to enhance communication, timely escalation, and adherence to Martha's Rule.

Driver Diagram

Aim	Primary Driver	Secondary Driver	Change Idea
To fully embed the EPR flowchart questions, "Are you concerned about the patient?" and "How does the patient feel?", into routine practice on the Hatherley Ward (HASU), achieving 50% compliance within six months to enhance communication, timely escalation, and adherence to Martha's Rule	Effective Patient and Staff Escalation System	Create a clear process to address concerns quickly and effectively for patients, family, carers, and staff.	Train staff on how to use the Patient Wellness Questions on EPR.
	Improved Patient and Staff Communication	Enhance communication to ensure concerns are understood and addressed.	Conduct weekly audits to track compliance with Martha's Rule.
	Staff Engagement and Training	Staff are well-trained and engaged to optimise patient safety and experience.	Share audit results with department managers and present them to staff during team meetings or huddles.
	Organisational Support and Processes	Establish systems that ensure consistency and ease in escalation processes.	Conduct pre and post-teaching survey to asses their awareness and confident of Martha's Rule.
			Appoint EPR champions in each department for support.
			Display posters and leaflets to raise awareness of Martha's Rule.
			Include the Patient Wellness Questions in regular staff appraisals.
			Organise informal sessions for staff to discuss challenges and solutions.
			Use compliance data to recognize and reward high-performing teams.
			Develop digital tools for easy recording of patient wellness responses
			Ensure senior leaders provide visible support for Martha's Rule initiatives.

PDSA

PDSA: Assessing Staff Awareness and Training on Martha's Rule in EPR

- Conduct a Baseline Survey to assess staff awareness and compliance.
- Develop and deliver teaching sessions on Martha's Rule and EPR flowchart questions.
- Identify pilot wards (HASU) for initial implementation.
- Timeline: March 2025
- Success Measures: Baseline compliance data collected; Training materials prepared; Staff feedback on training effectiveness.

- Launch training sessions for staff.
- Implement EPR flowchart questions in routine practice.
- Begin compliance audits and staff feedback collection.
- Timeline: Jan - April 2025
- Success Measures: % of staff trained; % of inpatients had PWQ completed; Initial staff feedback collected.

- Adjust training strategies based on findings.
- Modify workflow or documentation as needed.
- Plan for full-scale rollout to other departments.
- Establish ongoing monitoring and sustainability strategies.
- Timeline: May 2025 onwards
- Success Measures: Compliance improvements achieved; Refinements implemented; Plan for hospital-wide rollout finalised.

- Analyse audit results to measure staff compliance.
- Compare pre- and post-training surveys to assess improvements.
- Identify challenges and barriers affecting adoption.
- Timeline: March - May 2025
- Success Measures: Compliance rates compared to baseline; Challenges identified and documented; Staff confidence levels assessed.

PDSA: Enhancing Compliance Tracking

- Conduct weekly audits to monitor staff compliance with Martha's Rule processes.
- Implement Patient Wellness Question tool in EPR to streamline the auditing process for patient wellness responses.
- Gather feedback from staff on usability and effectiveness of EPR.

- Carry out weekly compliance audits, collecting data on adherence to Martha's Rule.
- Pilot Patient Wellness Question tools for auditing patient wellness responses, ensuring ease of use and accuracy.
- Engage staff in using EPR and document their feedback.

- Refine Patient Wellness Question tools based on audit findings and staff feedback.
- Provide further training or support where necessary to improve compliance.
- Establish ongoing monitoring and iterative improvements to sustain high compliance rates.

- Analyse audit results to identify trends, gaps, and areas for improvement.
- Assess the effectiveness of Patient Wellness Question tool based on accuracy, efficiency, and user feedback.
- Identify any barriers to compliance.

PDSA: Strengthening Leadership Support and Champion Engagement for Martha's Rule

- Secure commitment from senior leaders to visibly support and advocate for Martha's Rule initiatives.
- Identify and appoint Martha's Rule champions in each department to act as key points of contact and provide support.
- Develop a structured approach for leaders and champions to engage with staff and promote best practices.

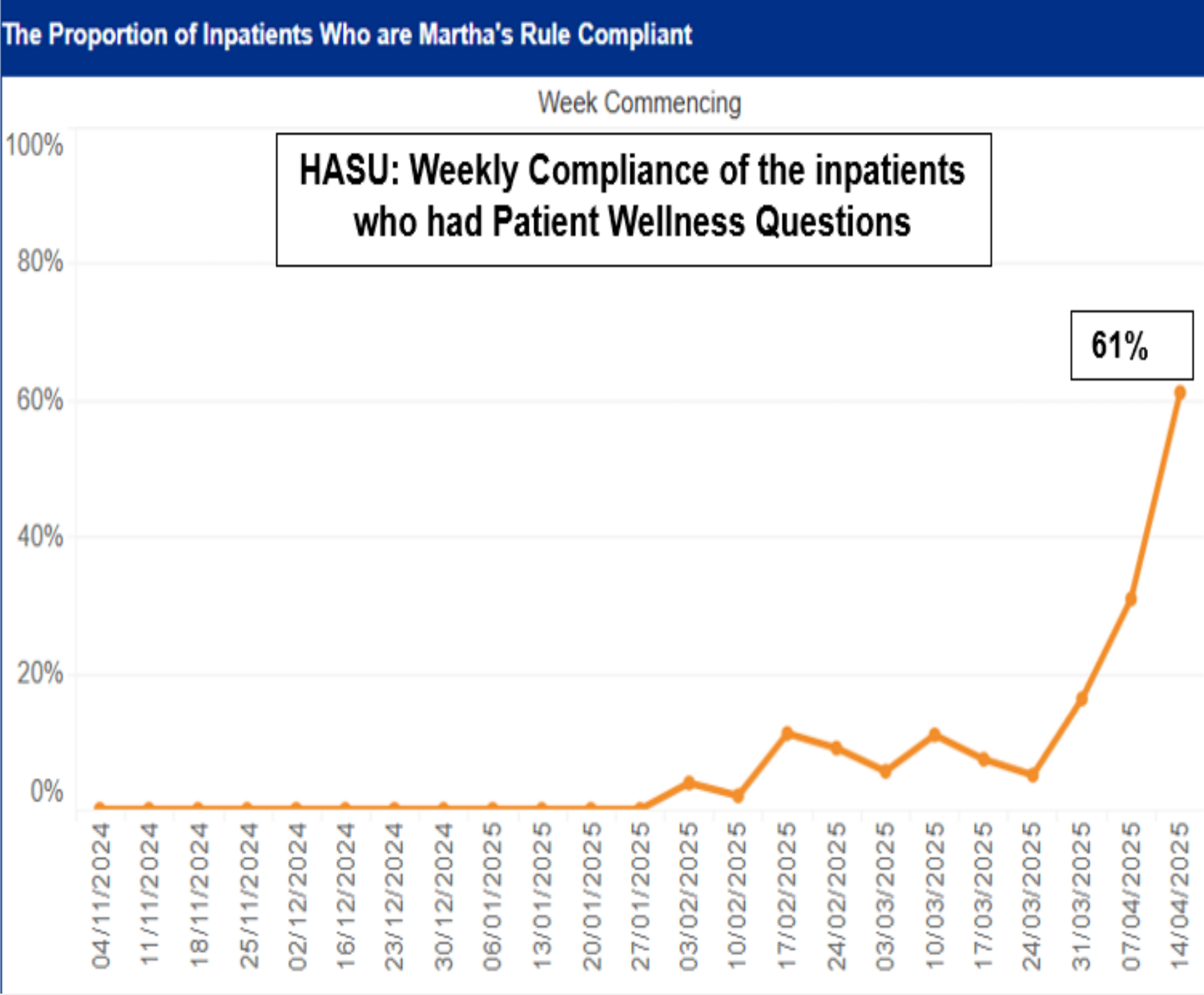
- Arrange leadership briefings to reinforce the importance of Martha's Rule and outline expectations for visible support.
- Select and train departmental champions to guide staff and address concerns.
- Implement regular check-ins between senior leaders and champions to monitor engagement and impact.

- Strengthen leadership visibility through targeted initiatives such as walkarounds, staff forums, and open-door policies.
- Provide ongoing training and support to champions to enhance their role.
- Adjust strategies based on feedback to improve engagement and sustain commitment across all levels.

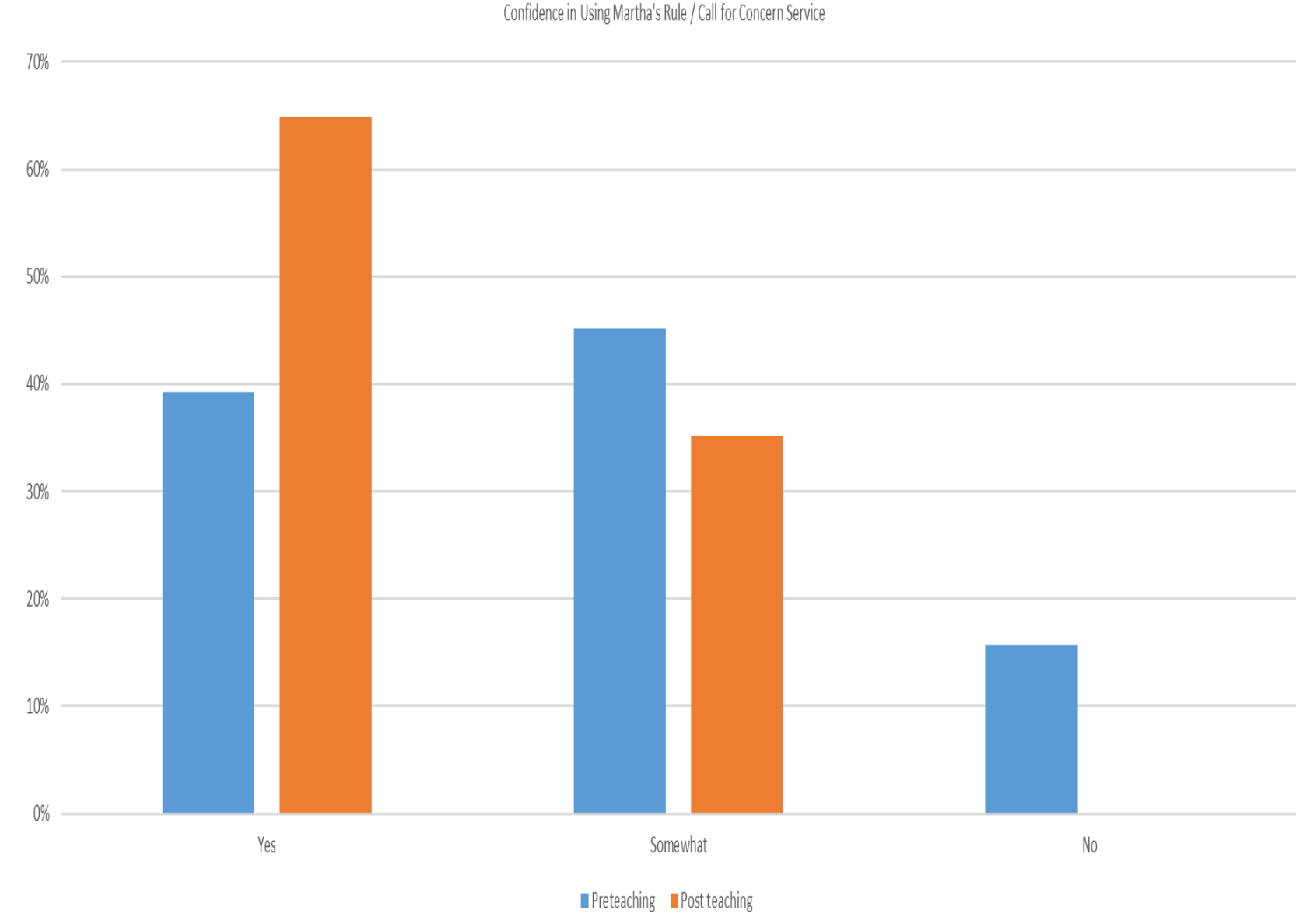
- Gather feedback from staff on the perceived level of senior leadership support.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Martha's Rule champions in assisting staff and promoting compliance.
- Identify gaps or challenges in leadership engagement and champion effectiveness.

Measures

Outcome Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Percentage of compliance with embedding the EPR flowchart questions ("Are you concerned about the patient?" and "How does the patient feel?") in routine practice.Improvement in timely escalation of concerns and adherence to Martha's Rule.
Process Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of staff trained on using the EPR flowchart questions.Frequency of audits assessing the correct documentation of patient concerns.Percentage of patient cases where the flowchart questions are documented and acted upon.
Balancing Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Impact on staff workload (e.g., does implementing the flowchart increase documentation burden?).Incidence of unnecessary escalations (e.g., are there more alerts that do not require intervention?).Reduction in adverse patient outcomes due to delayed escalation.



Pre vs. Post Confidence & Awareness



Next Step

