



From open ward to single bed units; transition of the NICU

Challenge

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the Radboudumc Amalia Children's Hospital was planning to move to a new location. The biggest changes were the transition from open ward nursing to single bed units and the introduction of new technology such as care phones (mobile devices). This transition had a major impact on the NICU's work processes and the communication between staff. To ensure that the NICU staff felt comfortable and confident in their new work environment, the Amalia Children's Hospital asked Philips to help prepare for this transition.

Solution

Philips consultants structured the change process and facilitated various co-creation sessions to develop the new way of working. During these sessions, specific attention was paid to defining a future-proof identity and culture. The new work processes and agreements were all documented in a Roadbook. The Philips team also provided a blueprint that the Amalia Children's Hospital can use for future change projects.

The Amalia Children's Hospital is part of Radboudumc in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and brings together various specialties in children's healthcare. Every year, around 25,000 children are admitted to the children's hospital, which specializes in complex, rare hereditary and congenital disorders. Children and their parents are actively involved in the care process. The staff of the Neonatology department treat newborns who require intensive care.

Results



New work processes



Future-proof identity and culture



Improved collaboration and team spirit



Blueprint for change projects

"The power of collaborating with Philips is that they have experience with, and knowledge of medical technology, innovation, and healthcare. They think beyond the technology and know how to engage a team in developing new work processes."

Anke Loeffen, Care Manager

Along with the planned move to a new location, the NICU also made the transition from open ward to single bed units. The Amalia Children's Hospital wanted to optimally prepare its staff for this transition and closely involve them in the process of developing the new way of working. Philips collaborates closely as a partner with Radboudumc and was asked to assist in preparing for this transition.

Single bed units: Family integrated care

Single bed units offer various benefits, including family integrated care, more peace and quiet for patients, privacy for their parents and a reduced risk of spreading infections. At the same time, it requires a different way of working. This particularly affects nurses who are used to monitoring all patients in an open ward.

The project was managed by a core team consisting of NICU nurses, Philips consultants and a consultant from Radboudumc, who also acted as the linking pin to other change and innovation projects within the hospital. The goal was to give the team as much control as possible in shaping the content of the new work processes. Therefore, the work processes were developed in co-creation with a delegation from each NICU function group, which consisted of neonatologists, residents, care assistants, nurses, team leads and secretaries. This resulted in ownership and support, which are vital for the success of a change project such as this. Meanwhile, Philips focused on structuring and managing the co-creation process as well as the overall preparation of the transition.

Assessing the current situation

The project was executed in phases. The Philips consultants began by assessing the current state by means of observations and interviews.

They interviewed staff from all function groups about the current processes and the changes they could expect. Furthermore, knowledge sharing sessions were organized with other hospitals that had already successfully made the transition to single bed units. In this way, best practices, successes, and pitfalls could be shared and staff were able to ask questions. The current state was visualized to illustrate to the NICU team what would change and what would remain the same.

Change themes



Logistics



Smart Hospital



Collaboration



Working Agreements



Culture



Family Integrated Care

Six change themes were defined based on the initial assessment: Logistics, Smart Hospital, Collaboration, Working Agreements, Culture and Family Integrated Care. Subject matter experts (SMEs) - a sub-team of two nurses and a team lead - were appointed for each team. These ambassadors helped to prioritize the issues and ensured that colleagues with the right expertise participated in the co-creation sessions. They also played an important role in communicating proposals and decisions within the department and generate support for them.





Defining new work processes

The change themes were further elaborated on during two co-creation rounds, which Philips facilitated. During these sessions, the team was challenged to think about the most efficient new way of working for the single bed units. In the first session, key issues were elaborated on. In the second round, the new work processes and working agreements were validated. For the Collaboration theme, for example, the team decided to start each morning with a meeting with delegates from the entire team to flag and coordinate important issues. For the Logistics theme, practical concerns were addressed, such as the impact on the current routes and the new division of tasks for restocking and storing materials in patients' rooms. While defining the new way of working, processes were tested and where feasible, implemented straight away.

Technology and process reinforce each other

The Smart Hospital theme was approached from two different angles: the technology and its impact on the work processes. In an open ward, an alarm from a patient monitor can be heard by all. In single bed units, nurses primarily receive alarms from their patients on their care phones (mobile devices). Philips Hospital Patient Monitoring assisted the NICU team with the configuration of the technology, e.g., by configuring smart alarm limits with the use of Smart Alarm Delay. This means care professionals only receive clinically relevant alarms on their device, which helps prevent alarm fatigue. Additionally, practical agreements were made about the use of care phones. For example, who should receive your alarms when you are away from the department? Discussing and clarifying such issues together resulted in peace of mind and trust.

Defining identity

This project created momentum to consider the department's identity and culture. During the co-creation sessions, the team defined four core values for a new and future-proof identity: Trust, fun & sense of humor, collaboration, and expertise. The new values and the related practical agreements contribute to an open culture and to a safe and positive work environment, which is crucial in times when care staff are under immense pressure.

"Philips provided a lot of structure during the preparation for the transition. This ensured that things are running smoothly in our new department. Our staff are highly satisfied and enjoy their work. I am very proud of the end result."


Anke Loeffen, Care Manager

Roadbook

After defining the future work processes, the lead was handed over to the Amalia Children's Hospital so they could implement the new way of working and ensure its use by the team. In preparation, the Philips team documented all validated work processes, roles, and tasks in a Roadbook. Prior to the transition, the NICU team discussed this document on a daily basis and every NICU staff member has a copy on their desktop for reference purposes. Furthermore, Philips provided a blueprint for change projects within the children's hospital, which is already being used by other departments.

Smooth transition

The relocation has been successfully completed. The thorough preparation gave the NICU team insight into the upcoming changes and created trust in a safe transition. This ensured that everyone got off to a good start in the new department.



"The co-creation sessions were perceived to be highly educational because the team got the chance to contribute to the new processes, which we are actually putting into practice in the single bed units."

Rosita Wellink, Team Lead Perinatology Care

Co-creation

Co-creation is a design-thinking methodology that Philips uses for its consulting and change management projects. Co-creation is about working together and tackling challenges together. This promotes support and ownership. For this change project, it was important that all function groups were represented during the co-creation sessions. In this way, issues were examined from different perspectives, and each care professional had the opportunity to contribute to the future work processes. Everyone was actively involved in shaping the new way of working.



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