



Updating administration and offering pre-employment courses to meet staffing demand

University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust saved more than £2 million on temporary staffing in one year after streamlining its temporary workforce management system, and piloting a new scheme for unqualified trainees.

High impact change 2: Manage the process and take control

Up until 2003, we had several different processes for managing bank and agency requests which made it extremely difficult to manage demand, control expensive agency spending and meet the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts' criteria for bank staff.

What we did:

We updated and corroborated our temporary working policies across the trust, and we outsourced our temporary worker payroll and administration. We also introduced e-timesheets to minimise both administration and opportunities for fraud, and brought in a second-tier authorisation process to control demand.

We began using management information to become better equipped to manage demand and set controls and limits on our use of temporary and flexible staff. With this data, we can compare and monitor the temporary staffing requirements of each ward, and the most expensive shifts are clearly highlighted.

We also established a client relations team, which has made it easier for us to share best practice and to learn about effective initiatives from other trusts in the area.

High impact change 3: Manage your workforce, establish a sustainable supply

We were struggling to find local healthcare assistants, so we introduced a new way of offering local people with no previous healthcare experience pre-employment courses, empowering them to train and work within the NHS.

What we did:

The new course provided successful applicants with two weeks of unpaid training, including supervised ward assignments. We then gave our trainees the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge by completing NVQ level 2 and 3 courses.

As a further measure to make our workforce more sustainable, we introduced flexible shift times and shorter shifts. This not only ensured that we could provide cover for busy periods, but it also reduced our costs by minimising the overall time the flexible worker was required on the ward. Since implementing these new shifts we have noticed an improvement in the quality, reliability and professionalism of flexible staff.

Results and next steps

Now that we have reduced our reliance on agency staff and have implemented innovative and sustainable staffing solutions, we are reassured that we can deliver better continuity of care. We are proud to have effectively reduced our staffing budget without compromising on quality.

In the first year since we implemented these changes, the cost of temporary staffing decreased by more than £2 million. Shifts filled by expensive agency staff fell from 35 per cent to 19 per cent, reducing agency spend from over £3 million to just £900,000.

With unqualified agency use virtually eliminated, qualified agency usage is restricted to 'hard to find' specialist skills, accounting for less than 7 per cent of shift fill and less than £500,000 a year.

Nursing has been meeting its monthly savings targets ahead of schedule and has been able to bring forward future targets, saving up to £100,000 each month. We are now implementing the 'Fit for 15' programme so that we will meet our financial saving and performance targets in 2015.

