Reducing time to hire at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Following a detailed analysis of its recruitment processes, Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust implemented a number of changes that have resulted in a reduction in recruitment processing times and overall time to hire.

The case for change

In November 2015 the recruitment team at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust evaluated the trust’s recruitment process for its pitfalls and good practice. A team of stakeholders from across the trust came together to:

- map out the recruitment process
- identify some performance metrics
- outline the areas of responsibility that were held, influenced or managed by different people throughout the process.

From carrying out this work it was evident that the trust’s hiring process was laborious, with recruitment checks averaging five weeks and an average turnaround time of 26 weeks from a person resigning to starting in post. The work concluded that the current process was clunky, not fit for purpose, and was resulting in higher use of agency staff - costing the trust more money.

The solution

By attending the regional streamlining meetings and identifying good practice within other NHS organisations, the trust decided to go a step further and map a future, idealised process that would be smoother, smarter and more efficient, enabling staff to start sooner in the trust.

The new and improved process would reduce the large number of ‘touch points’ for the hired candidates and managers, for example, previously a manager would complete an ‘authority to recruit’ form and submit it to finance, if information was missing it would go back to the manager, then back to finance before going to the vacancy panel. It was a time consuming and often frustrating process.
This piece of work showed that if the trust re-configured and ordered the steps in its process differently, for example, running the pre-hire Inter Authority Transfer (IAT) prior to joining – enabling correct salary to be included in the contract and information about continuous service dates at pre-hire stage.

Another key part of this work was to improve the way in which collective data was managed and to identify a system that would help to further reduce the time to hire for new starters. The trust implemented Trac HR recruitment software in March 2016, which tracked, recorded and reported on all elements of the recruitment process, this meant that the trust could set deadlines, have automated reminders and have oversight of any further obstacles in the process.

By implementing these changes the trust estimated it would be able to reduce the time to hire to 21 weeks within three months.

Outcomes

Following the re-organisation of its recruitment processes, the implementation of factual referencing, running pre-hire IAT’s, and finally the introduction of Trac software, the trusts’ time to hire is down from 26 to 15 weeks. The team has also been able to reduce its recruitment document processing times from 35 to 19 days.

The ability to have all newly recruited candidates on a central database means that the recruitment team can easily access the information and can work in a more proactive way, for example, they can effectively monitor KPI’s and compliance and provide detailed reports for hiring managers.

“It was sometimes difficult to listen to some of the criticisms that came from the stakeholders that engage with our recruitment process. However, the feedback was fantastic for helping us move forward to a much more service-centric approach.

“We have learned from this process that we need to consistently improve and we are continuing to revisit our project plans to ensure our streamlined, efficient approach is our business as usual approach.”

Recruitment and Retention Lead

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