Implementing e-Rostering for all medical trainees

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust has improved the way its medical trainee on-call rosters are compiled and managed. It is now planning to end paper rotas for medical staff, which will save time for the medical staffing team and medical trainees.

High impact change 1:
Increase understanding of the issue

When we began the project our rosters were administered as paper records, which were very time consuming to coordinate. We also recognised that processes in place for doctors to make swaps in the rosters were cumbersome and we wanted to make better use of the technology that is available to improve working systems.

What we did:

The trust has been using Zircadian's e-Rota and e-Monitor for the last six years to plan rotas and undertake hours monitoring exercises. It saw a demonstration of Zircadian's e-Roster and could see many benefits to using an online system to manage rosters.

We put together a proposal for implementation of e-Roster which was discussed with IT and procurement. The proposal was approved and the trust purchased a three year licence of e-Roster, effective from May 2010.

High impact change 2:
Manage the process and take control

The trust needed to manage the process with Zircadian, our business units and medical trainees.

What we did:

We held a meeting with Zircadian to discuss the trust's business unit structure, rotas and cross-site working so that Zircadian could set up these structures in e-Roster.

After receiving training from Zircadian, the medical staffing team entered the details of all medical trainee posts and placements into the system. This exercise took a while to complete but was a one-off task.

The next stage was to allocate trainees to the posts and placements and link them into a rota via the e-Rota programme.

Once this process was done, a roster was generated at the touch of a button to follow the template of the relevant rota. The trust was able to take account minimum cover arrangements on the wards during this part of the process.

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

The trust was keen to ensure that staff were trained to use the system and ensure buy-in from staff. We knew we needed to:

- be prepared to run two systems (electronic and paper) for an interim period, accepting that in the short term there are no savings on time
- get one or two trainee doctors to champion the project, promoting it to their colleagues.

What we did:

By August 2010 we had informed our first on-call trainees that their rosters were available online. Most doctors were already familiar with using the Zircadian system as they had previously recorded their hours of work in the monitoring programme.

We then trained our switchboard staff to access the data in e-Roster. As a result, the switchboard now has an accurate 'live' version of the rosters to refer to.

Results and next steps

Feedback to date has been positive and implementation of e-Roster has helped the trust identify gaps in rotas. Trainees are able to log into the secure portal and see when locum duties are required.

The next steps to fully implement e-Rostering for medical trainees is to work with Zircadian to develop the process for managing swaps and changes to the rotas so that trainees can enter details themselves.

This will allow medical staffing to end the paper back-up rota templates. Once this takes place, there will be savings on time for the medical staffing team and for medical trainees.