University Hospital of Birmingham (UHB) NHS Foundation Trust

Nursing a work-life balance culture in the NHS

Background to the project

The University Hospital of Birmingham (UHB) NHS Foundation Trust are taking part in a pilot scheme which will see the introduction and implementation of an electronic rostering, self-rostering and time and attendance solution from SMART. The Trust are looking to the system to reduce staff turnover, to assist nursing staff with achieving & maintaining a good work-life balance, and aid recruitment by offering more flexibility.

The new Human Logistics system, which is being deployed as a Fully Managed Service, will allow ward managers to proactively plan in advance how to best use the staff available at any given time. Whilst doing this it will also ensure that individual shift patterns adhere to the Working Time Regulations, as well as enabling staff to choose the working hours that suit their work-life balance needs.

More choice with Self-Rostering

Accessible via Smart Web Technology over the NHS Net, SMART self-rostering functionality will allow nurses to submit their positive and negative shift preferences within the roster period allowing them to effectively indicate which shifts they want to work. They can also use the system to submit off duty requests such as annual and study leave, ultimately increasing their ability to manage their own time, balance work and home commitments, leading to improved morale, job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism.

Benefits

- ■ **Enable flexible self-rostering**

- ■ **Improve work-life balance for nurses**

- ■ **Improve payroll accuracy**

- ■ **Reduce administration workload and expenditure**

- ■ **Improve staff motivation and retention**

- ■ **Increase organisational agility and responsiveness to patient demands**

- ■ **Meet EU Working Time Regulations**

- ■ **Reduce absenteeism**

- ■ **Improve resource planning to help meet fluctuating demand**

- ■ **Facilitate Improving Working Lives (IWL) standard**

"The way our systems are structured at the moment means they don't work efficiently. Payroll, for example, is done manually which means vast quantities of paper records need to be physically transported between sites in order to be processed by hand. We currently issue 1 million pay slips a year so there is a wide margin for error as you would expect. The wrong information is sometimes keyed in by mistake and records get lost or misplaced. The new system will not only give us 100% accuracy but it will also free-up more admin/back office time which we can redeploy elsewhere. It will also mean that the nurses can be confident that they will be paid the correct amount each month."

Steve Abbotts, Staff Services Manager
University Hospital Birmingham.

100% accuracy for 1 million payslips per year

Steve Abbotts continues: *"The way our systems are structured at the moment means they don't work efficiently. Payroll, for example, is done manually which means vast quantities of paper records need to be physically transported between sites in order to be processed by hand. We currently issue 1 million pay slips a year so there is a wide margin for error as you would expect. The wrong information is sometimes keyed in by mistake and records get lost or misplaced. The new system will not only give us 100% accuracy but it will also free-up more admin/back office time which we can redeploy elsewhere. It will also mean that the nurses can be confident that they will be paid the correct amount each month."*

A genuine win: win for the NHS and staff

"It is a genuine win: win situation for all concerned," says Steve. *"The nurses will be happy because the flexibility of the scheme empowers them to make their own decisions with regards to when they work. And the hospital management will be happy because they are improving the quality of the services and increasing efficiency."*

"It's all about future proofing", says Steve. *"The NHS has some very big issues that it needs to address, such as flexibility of working practices, empowerment of staff and cost effective care delivery. But like any organisation, the NHS needs to invest and modernise in order to deliver the levels of service quality that the public demands. The cost of this system is dwarfed by the huge potential benefits to nursing staff and in terms of more efficient, cost effective and streamlined administration processes. We expect that through the benefits offered by both the Rostering and T&A solution the investment will be recovered within a year of implementation."*

Steve Abbotts is excited by the significance of the project not just for the Hospital but for the nurses as well.

"It is vital that our nurses feel in control of their lives and are achieving an improved work-life balance. The NHS is committed to 'Improving Working Lives' and it is now one of the criteria on which we are judged when we are awarded our star rating. But it's not just about ticking boxes, if our nurses are happy they will work better and they will stay with the health service, which in turn means we can provide better care to our patients and that's what it's all about."

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