East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust Case Study

Changing rostering culture

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust undertook a flexible working project in an effort to empower frontline staff to take ownership of e-rostering, as the trust believed this would lead to more effective workforce deployment, improved staff work-life balance, and increased productivity.

The trust decided to make several changes to its rostering processes during the project, which included:

- Enabling and encouraging staff to access rosters online via EmployeeOnline

- Opening rosters to allow 100% of contracted hours to be requested (often referred to as self-rostering)

- Running educational workshops on how to make the most out of requests – not just requesting days off, but more positively requesting shifts they can work Promoting shared governance and self-ownership of rosters

- Creating fixed working patterns when this worked for the service and individual

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>
> Rupert Clarke
> Clinical Workforce
> Systems Lead

The trust saw great results from the changes implemented as part of a wider workforce optimisation piece the trust was undertaking. For example, in the medicine division:

- Online rostering login requests increased by an average of 13% and up to 48% for some areas, meaning 60% of shifts are being self-rostered

- Roster approval lead time improved by over 20 days

- Temporary staffing usage reduced by 14%

- Agency usage reduced by 12%

- Sickness decreased by 3%

- Care hours per patient day for substantive staff increased, which meant there was a reduction in the need for temporary staff, without compromising patient care

Prior to this project, most conversations about rostering happened at a strategic level, because of the need to control approval lead-time and look at annual leave management. But by engaging matrons and ward managers, where most of the interaction about staffing occurs, the trust was able to get frontline staff to own rostering. This has introduced a shared governance approach to the way the trust rosters. To support this change, roster approval is possible at eight weeks and staff can now request all of contracted hours, resulting in an increase in EmployeeOnline usage.

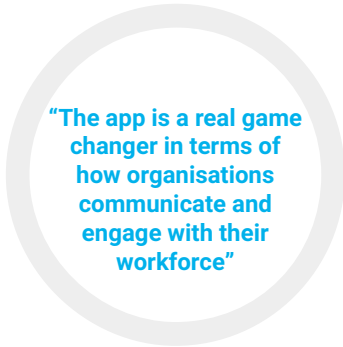↑ Online rostering login requests increased by up to 48%

↓ Temporary staffing usage reduced by 14%

↓ Sickness decreased by 3%

Rupert Clarke, Clinical Workforce Systems Lead, explains: "Using the EmployeeOnline application has really helped us promote shared governance across the organisation, now rostering is something that is done with staff not to staff.

"Giving staff the opportunity to self-roster has helped promote flexibility which has been linked to a better work life balance. We also found that self-rostering decreased the changes in rosters after roster approval as staff did not need to change or swap shifts."

Shifts being self-rostered 60%

"The app is a real game changer in terms of how organisations communicate and engage with their workforce"

Rupert concludes: "The app is a real game changer in terms of how organisations communicate and engage with their workforce, using technology as a social engagement tool helps teams grow a culture of togetherness that supports team retention and resilience which ultimately leads to improved team performance. "

The clear and transparent communication helps teams take a balanced and fair approach to having adult conversations about service need, particularly around to requesting and approving annual leave. The app helps managers and staff to understand each other's needs."

Changing the rostering process also brought about culture change, which has helped create an environment for sustained organisational learning in relation to rostering. An independent audit of the service noted the collegiate nature of staffing meetings.

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