ALLOCATE

Allocate**Insight** Case Study

How better visibility of data is helping wards improve rostering at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS FT

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is using Allocate Insight to improve the way it uses its nursing workforce via effective rostering, in particular the management of unavailability.

Deputy Chief Nurse Sharon McNally explains how workforce data has helped raise awareness of the basics of rostering, such as managing unavailability, and improving the roster approval process, making it one of the best in the country.

How has data helped you target areas for improvement?

Allocate Insight has enabled better visibility of what is happening on each ward with detailed information that can be used to make comparisons between wards. The data provided key lines of enquiry which enabled collaborative working with ten wards which had the greatest challenges in terms of maximising the availability of staff. Monthly meetings were held with the selected wards, where the unavailability, the classifications, and how they were managing allowances were discussed – this facilitated ideas and actions for improvement. Working with detailed information with a group of wards has proven to work, rather than applying a 'broad brush' approach.

The intervention focussed on ensuring that data was accurate either by cleansing, or making sure the data was a true reflection of what was happening on the ward - for example, the incorrect recording of clinical and non-clinical hours.

Wider organisational learning and use of the data was achieved through using the reports to inform the key performance indicators (KPIs) for rostering which were circulated more widely across the organisation.

How has this helped you improve rostering basics?

Efficient and effective rostering has been a focus for the organisation. Allocate Insight data helped ensure we have the detail to help wards deliver the strategy. An example of this is that once a quarter the data is used to inform a meeting with each divisional team, where the six KPIs are reviewed in detail. This enables wards to understand the data, where they are performing well and what they need to do to make improvements; it also serves as a training opportunity to broaden the knowledge of senior nurses with the use of the tools and the KPIs. For instance, when these meetings first started, there were gaps in the understanding of the unavailability '22 per cent headroom', how it is made up and the best practice in management of the headroom (unavailability).

What are the next steps?

The aim is to share learning across the organisation. The same approach will be used with the next cohort of challenged wards and the quarterly meetings will continue. However, the great thing is that the overall organisational knowledge has improved and areas are making improvement outside of these meetings – adding to our overall ability to ensure the right staff, in the right place at the right time. It also contributes to cost avoidance for the organisation.

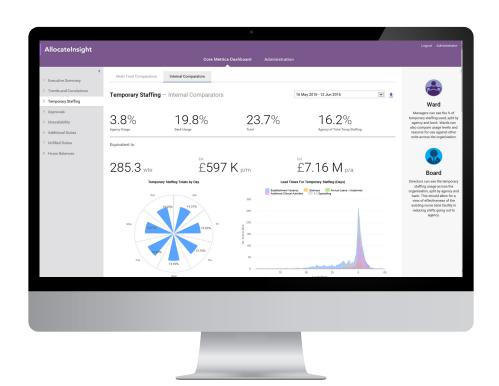## What have been the benefits of increased visibility?

Better visibility has helped target areas for improvement. Broadly for the organisation, for every 0.5 per cent reduction in headroom would have an approximate saving of £8,000 per annum per unit. There are targets set to reduce the current percentage by 0.5 per cent total per quarter per inpatient unit, and this a major part of the nursing workforce efficiency programme.

The data enables us to know where we are on our journey, where we have come from and keeps a focus on where we can make further improvements to reach our aim. Internal comparisons help senior leaders and board sponsors uncover pockets of good and not-so-good practice within the organisation, along with the baseline metric for each of the key indicators.

In addition, the detailed data helps to raise awareness of the basics of rostering, particularly when it comes to all types of managing leave. Some of the lessons that have been learned will be very local to specific wards, but there is organisational learning. For example, one of the things where there has been great improvement is the lead time for rosters approval. CUHFT is now one of the best trusts for having rosters approved six weeks in advance and Allocate Insight has really helped achieve that.

Allocate-Insight is a managed service that combines monthly reporting, always on interactive dashboards - such as the one pictured, metrics and benchmarks together with Allocate's expert advice to drive rostering improvement.

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