

Northampton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Case Study

Improving approval lead time through greater visibility and engagement.

About the Trust

Northampton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has utilised HealthRoster for several years, however the Trust wanted to better understand, manage and improve the use of its substantive and temporary workforce. To enable this, they decided to implement AllocatInsight.

The Trust had a particular focus on approval lead time as a catalyst for wider workforce efficiencies and reducing agency staff spend.

Wendy Glenister, Head of Workforce Systems, explains:

“We believed it is important to focus on approval lead, because if you don’t effectively plan the rostering in advance this will be detrimental to the other KPI’s, in particular temporary staffing spend.”

“When NHFT first received the data visualisation from Insight in October 2017, it was clear that the trust were not hitting the six-week approval lead time recommended by Lord Carter. 20% of units were not fully approving rosters at all, plus the budgeted establishment did not reflect actuality.”

“The information we were receiving from Allocate Insight was not reflective of actuality because the Trust did not have the budget accurately in HealthRoster.

“So, the trust decided to get the right people together to action this.”

“We believed it is important to focus on approval lead, because if you don’t effectively plan the rostering in advance this will be detrimental to the other KPI’s, in particular temporary staffing spend.”

Wendy Glenister
Head of Workforce Systems

w/c 23 October 2017
Average approval lead time: 3.1 weeks
Earliest: 9 weeks
Latest: -5.5 weeks

Transformation and engagement

To support this transformation, the Trust established an AllocatInsight Project Board. This is chaired by Chris Oakes, the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, and attended by corporate, operations and clinical colleagues.

During the first five months of implementation, the Trust needed to make system and process changes and review which areas should be included in the visualisations before they could effectively use Insight.

The Project Board set out a clear action plan for implementing Insight, embedding six-week roster approval and improving workforce management across the Trust. This included a comprehensive engagement programme with matrons, ward managers and service managers.

Wendy says: “In our first year of implementing the change, we focused on education, raising awareness and getting everyone to approve rosters before the start date of the roster.

By August 2019, the Trust wants to achieve 100% of rosters meeting a six-week roster approval lead time.

w/c 9 April 2018
Average approval lead time: 3.3 weeks
Earliest: 11.5 weeks
Latest: -6.8 weeks

Executive engagement

“In August 2018, we achieved 100% full roster approval before the start date of the roster, however not within the six-week approval lead target but it was good to see a noticeable behaviour change. “Ever since, we have seen 100% roster approval before the start date of the current roster period.”

In October 2018, to enable sustainable change, the Project Board received approval from the Executive Board to make policy amendments regarding:

- A requirement for six-week roster approval lead time
- An escalation process giving Deputy Directors of Operations the responsibility to contact managers who are not achieving a six-week roster approval lead time
- Alignment of the Annual Leave Policy to the e-Rostering Protocol
- Monitoring of the six-week roster approval at executive level

Following this backing from the Executive Board, the project manager, Joe Pearce started sending out weekly reminder emails to managers for rosters to be approved, alongside the on-going engagement activity.

Progress to date

In December 2018, the Trust hit an average approval lead time of six weeks for the first time.

Wendy explains:

"This was brilliant to see as it shows significant progress being made across the units. It's particularly great that we are now not seeing any negative lead times.

"The key drivers for this have been: staff engagement and education, board buy-in and director escalation. However, we still have a way to go to achieve our aim of six-week roster approval lead times on all units not just as an average."



"We have seen a month on month reduction in agency staff spend aligned to the approval lead time improvement."

Wendy Glenister
Head of Workforce Systems

w/c 17 December 2018

Average approval lead time:
6.1 weeks

Earliest: 14.9 weeks

Latest: 2.9 weeks