

247 Time Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

From a lack of workforce transparency and consistency in agency worker pay rates, to greater control and total agency workforce visibility

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides services for around 500,000 people living in Bradford and communities across Yorkshire. Its 5,500 staff work over several sites, including Bradford Royal Infirmary and St Luke's Hospital. It also manages local community hospitals at Westwood Park, Westbourne Green, Shipley and Eccleshill. The trust started working with 247 Time to improve agency workforce transparency, provide assurance around quality of care and create efficiency savings through better expenditure control. We spoke to Rachel Pyrah Flexible Workforce Services Manager about the benefits and how it has improved visibility and reporting of the agency workforce as well as helping to reduce agency spend by 27 per cent in the first year.

What was the situation at the trust before the partnership with 247 Time?

Up until April 2016, agency workers were managed by each division which meant that each had its own system in place. In some cases, this meant paper records were being used. As a result, there was little visibility and no trust-wide reporting on the agency workforce. In addition, the finance team was having to deal with different teams and there was no consistency in agency rates.



How did the trust meet the agency challenge?

A business case was approved which brought together three teams: e-Rostering, nurse bank and the locum booking team. This created a flexible workforce department to improve transparency, visibility and control and reduce agency spend. At the same time, we decided to work with 247 Time.

What were the benefits of a single system?

By ensuring we had direct engagement with our agency workforce we managed to realise efficiencies and savings of around £2m, but we also have better visibility and reporting is now excellent. In the first year our agency spend reduced by 27 per cent from £19.8m a year to £14.4m and we are on track to reach £12m spend this year.

We now have a meeting with Executive Directors every two weeks to monitor our agency spend and all the latest figures are available to support our decisions. The finance department is also spending less time on agency workforce administration. We are no longer in a position where departments are sending through invoices to finance.



Has this changed the trust's relationship with agencies?

We spent a lot of time with agencies on harmonising pay rates and explaining how our system was going to work. From their perspective we pay what we have agreed, and they can see that our reporting system is accurate and timely.

How has this initiative improved quality assurance?

Now the system can show us quickly whether a member of clinical staff sourced through agency is compliant with our practices. Previously we would have relied on each agency records to ensure compliance. Everything is easily accessible and in one place.

What else has the flexible workforce team achieved?

We realised there was no consistency around nursing invoices. These were coming through the nurse bank team and, due to the volume we receive, it was difficult to give assurance that the rates were correct or whether shift times were correct. We carried out a detailed analysis of nursing invoices and found that in just 50 invoices there was over £600 overpaid in errors.

Potentially in one year that equates to over £250,000 which could have been incorrectly invoiced. Having established there were errors in nurse invoicing, we put together a business case and we are now putting them through 247 Time which ensures consistency in rates, shift times are accurate, and staff are paid on time. This saves time for the nurse bank team and our finance department.

Has working with 247 Time been a positive experience?

The implementation was a significant project for the trust but has gone smoothly thanks to the way that 247 Time has worked with us. This means everything from providing training support to explain to agencies how the system works to continuing to help us produce ad hoc reports at short notice – which happens regularly through Freedom of Information requests. The whole team gets on well with 247 Time.

