Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

Cuts costs and frees up more time to care thanks to workforce management solutions from SMART

Use of electronic rota management system improves clinical and financial efficiency at ward level - Bank usage reduced by over 50% and head room contingency cut to 23% following the implementation of SMART's eRostering.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust is a large acute hospital trust that provides a full range of general hospital services to around 500,000 people living in the south of west Kent and parts of Sussex. In addition the Trust provides specialist cancer services to Kent and Canterbury Hospital and is at the forefront of developments in minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery. The Trust operates from four main sites which are Maidstone Hospital, Kent & Sussex Hospital, Pembury Hospital and Preston Hall.

BANK Solution

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust wanted to rationalise bank and agency expenditure by way of workforce management solution which would also act as an agent for change. The requirement was for an easy to use system that would help to:

- Identify where spend was not matching the workforce plan
- Provide a permanent record of hours worked with an audit trail
- Give managers more visibility and control of the workforce.

After a rigorous tender process SMART's workforce management system was selected because it best matched the Trust's requirements.

Savings on Nursing Budget

The trust has 1600 nursing staff using SMART's eRostering solution, which represents approximately 82% of all nursing staff. Over half are working on rosters with a live link to ESR payroll.

Head room allowance has reduced from 24% to 23% representing a saving of 1% of the nursing budget. *

Benefits

- **1600 nursing staff using SMART eRostering**
- **Head room contingency reduced to 23% saving 1% of the nursing budget**
- **Emergency Nurse Practitioners – bank usage reduced by 53% in the first six months of RPC implementation**
- **Automated Link to ESR payroll – accuracy improved to 95% compared to 50% with manual systems**
- **Time taken to produce rosters reduced by up to 75% releasing Senior Nursing Staff back to clinical care**

"The reduction in head room contingency of 1% is a great achievement. Across the entire nursing budget this represents a huge sum and was achieved without any cuts or drop in patient care, in fact we have improved patient care and safety."

Liza Wolvey, Project Manager for the eRostering rollout at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.

* The "head room" contingency is the extra staff needed above established requirements to ensure there is cover for holidays, sickness and other absence.

ESR Link

An automated link from the SMART system to payroll captures all data on hours worked and applicable rates of pay. The improved accuracy using the ESR link is at 95% compared to less than 50% when manual timesheets were in use.

Ward sisters are already more efficient because the time taken to produce rosters has been reduced by as much as 75%, releasing extremely talented and experienced staff to care for patients. In addition the time spent by managers checking and signing timesheets and completing absence returns is significantly reduced. For example, in the Neo Natal Unit, 7.5 hours per month have been released back to clinical care.

John Kennedy, Deputy Director of Nursing at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust said, *"We have certainly seen improved clinical and financial efficiency at ward level since the introduction of the new electronic rota management system. Time has been freed up for nurses for care. The Neo Natal Unit is a prime example where electronic timesheets now allow an experienced Neo Natal Nurse to be "on the floor" monitoring standards of care and coaching junior staff to everyone's benefit."*

Following the implementation of the SMART system managers are able to build rosters to match the workforce plan, against which they can measure efficiency. Previously there had been considerable local practice which was never properly documented, now everyone works to the same system. The system is visible and the personal element has been removed, so everyone knows that they are being treated fairly and the rules are applied consistently. If changes are made to a roster, for whatever reason, there is a clear audit trail.

Management Dashboards

Matrons and ADNs have a dashboard view from which they can see exactly what is happening in their area, in real time and can react accordingly. For instance, people can be redeployed if one area is short staffed. This has worked so well that the Trust is now pooling resources in areas that require similar skill sets, such as the Acute Assessment Unit, A&E and Trauma. The flexibility of SMART RPC has resulted in the Trust being able to utilise contract hours across these areas more efficiently and reduce the need for bank and agency usage. The dashboard also shows summarised annual leave taken, so that it can be managed throughout the year to avoid peaks and troughs where possible.

"It isn't just about saving money the Trust wants to improve the quality of care provided to patients and the quality of working conditions for staff."

Benefits at every step

"The implementation of SMART's workforce management systems is now well underway, with most areas of the system due to be completed by 31 March 2011. Already we are seeing both financial and cultural benefits. The managers like the dashboard facility which gives them control of their areas, morale has improved as staff feel they are being treated fairly and can see their hours well in advance so can plan their personal lives more effectively. The Trust is saving significant amounts of money by utilising its workforce more efficiently. We are better positioned to manage European Working Time Directive (EWTD) requirements, as all hours will be held in one system and we will be providing a better, safer service to our patients. The project is helping the Trust to challenge old working practices and has had the desired unifying effect. SMART has worked with us throughout the process. We can see that the system is developing all the time to better meet the requirements of the NHS. We feel confident that the product is evolving to meet our needs in the future." Said Liza Wolvey.

Change to improve quality and reduce costs

Liza Wolvey concluded, "It isn't just about saving money, the Trust wants to improve the quality of care provided to patients and the quality of working conditions for staff. Our aim is to implement safe and effective rosters that will improve working conditions and provide a clear record of who was working at any given time, while ensuring that there is always a correct mix of skills on wards to ensure patient safety and quality of care."

Bank management is the final piece of the jigsaw. This is being piloted in 3 areas allowing control and monitoring of temporary staffing along with streamlining processes. For Emergency Nurse Practitioners the Trust has already seen a reduction of 53% in bank usage in the first six months of the pilot.