



Western Health and Social Care Trust

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SMART generates Staff Productivity efficiencies in response to 'Transforming Your Care'

Major NHS employer in Northern Ireland boosts productivity and maximises the potential of 3,000 nursing staff with SMART eRostering from Kronos.



Established in April 2007, Western Health and Social Care Trust (Western Trust) provides health and social care services to approximately 290,000 residents. A major employer in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, the organisation's mission is to deliver high quality patient and client-focused care through well trained staff with high morale.

As part of an ongoing programme to further maximise employee performance and productivity, the Trust deployed SMART eRostering from Kronos. The project will be completed in the new, all single room, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen in 2013. SMART workforce management is already delivering tangible time savings, and is planned to be extended to cover facilities management and support services staff across the entire Trust.

Brendan McGrath, Assistant Director of Nursing, Western Trust commented, "Our aim is to ensure that we meet our care and staffing Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). The SMART system helps us to do this and provides benefits to staff on several different levels. Nurses see the fairness and equity of the system when shifts are assigned. Ward Sisters

particularly like the monitoring of contract hours used, and the prioritisation facilities within the system allowing staff to take more responsibility for their shifts."

Replacing Manual Processes

Before deploying SMART, the Western Trust relied entirely on manual processes to record staff time and administer shifts. This approach was labour intensive and placed additional burden on ward sisters and charge nurses whose management and administrative responsibilities had expanded rapidly over the past few years. Departments also had little visibility of how much bank and agency staff were being used. At the same time, increasing pressure came from central government to drive efficiencies across the Trust, first with the Comprehensive Spending Review and now with the 'Transforming Your Care' initiative.

eRostering Optimises Staff Skills

After presenting a solid business case to the Trust's Corporate Management Team (CMT), The Trust conducted a thorough review of the marketplace in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Procurement & Logistics Service (PaLS) before selecting

Fast Facts

- 5,000 staff to be covered by SMART eRostering Workforce Management solutions
- 3,000 nursing and midwifery staff at many sites including specialty and emergency operating theatres and Intensive Care
- SMART eRostering now provides efficient rosters and ensures the right staff with the skills are always on duty
- Care and staffing KPIs are more effectively managed
- SMART halves the time spent on creating staff rosters
- Powerful management information facilitates optimisation of staff resources
- Efficiencies generated by SMART support the government's 'Transforming Your Care' initiative

"SMART works very well in terms of product functionality and commercial approach. From the very beginning, I have been impressed by their professional attitude and business integrity."

Brendan McGrath, Assistant Director for Nursing at Western Health and Social Care Trust

the SMART workforce management solution. The Western Trust chose SMART for its simple, clean screen layout, robust functionality bundled into an easy-to-use, cost-effective package.

SMART eRostering now provides efficient rosters that ensure that nursing and midwifery staff, with the correct mix of skills and experience, are on duty for each and every shift. The system also helps the Trust to monitor the use of bank and agency staff.

The system has also been deployed at the operating department and intensive care departments in Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry. These departments, are traditionally thought to be the most challenging to move to eRostering due to their complex shifts requirements and on-call arrangements. For example, the operating department incorporates five specialty theatres, a dedicated elective surgery unit, and an emergency theatre all covered by a complement of 90 staff. The rosters provide 26 shifts which staff can request further complicated by preferred working patterns agreed through staff availing of flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies. Several roster configurations were tried to reach the point where the department is now successfully using SMART's eRostering solution.

Greater Efficiencies

The Western Trust has yielded benefits from the SMART implementation with very positive feedback received from ward sisters and charge nurses, staff and management alike. Staff appreciate the fairness of the system when shifts are assigned and ward sisters like the prioritisation facilities ensuring staff take responsibility for their shifts. Directors see the potential of the system to optimise staff resources, manage care and staffing KPIs and make efficiency gains.

The implementation of eRostering has reduced the amount of time taken to develop new rosters for the workforce by half, releasing highly qualified staff back to patient care. Other benefits include:

- Care and staffing KPIs can be monitored and managed more effectively
- More efficient monitoring of absence
- Full utilisation of available contract hours
- More efficient deployment and utilisation of in-house skills
- Better management of annual leave

Stronger Management Information

Managing staff requests more effectively has been especially successful. By using the SMART system, staff can log a request and assign it a priority enabling managers to tackle urgent issues



quickly. This has been particularly popular as it has promoted a sense of fairness and equity with staff, and removes some of the tension for ward managers when assigning shifts. This has helped to improve morale.

Information built up within the eRostering system will help the management board ensure that improvements in efficiency can be maintained throughout the Trust. Building on the success of the current SMART implementation the Trust plans to expand it to cover a further 2,000 facilities and support staff.

Catalyst For Change

Traditionally, nurses at the Trust have worked the 'long-day' or 12-hour shift pattern, with many wards and departments choosing to operate a roster of 3 long-days one week followed by 4 long-day shifts the next week. In theory, the long-day shifts are deemed to be the most efficient because they negate the need for frequent hand-overs and more staff. The SMART system – in matching skills and availability of staff at any one time – has revealed a flaw in this approach and has unearthed the impracticalities of dealing with traditional shift patterns. SMART is being used as a strategic tool to further streamline and improve processes, a real catalyst for change across the organisation.

Brendan concludes, "SMART works very well in terms of product functionality and commercial approach. From the very beginning, I have been impressed by their professional attitude and business integrity. Their openness, commitment to finding solutions to our needs, after sales support and even the challenge of bringing eRostering to theatres and intensive care, the support we have received has been second to none."

SMART

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