

Award for collaborative working

WINNER

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

Qualitative data from the e-roster systems provides this trust's board with robust assurance that new control procedures are working and are reducing costs in bank and agency spend.

The trust was heading for a huge financial deficit against forecast in 2015/16, with costs spiralling out of control and no robust processes and procedures for controlling bank and agency spend. This, coupled with the implementation of Monitor agency caps, highlighted that immediate and urgent action was required to regain control.

A project team was established with expertise in a number of areas including e-rostering, HR, finance, organisational development and bank management. The trust's board approved secondments from November 2015 to April 2016.

Allocate e-rostering systems were used to produce data on additional duty hours, unused contracted hours and annual leave. By doing this the project could map the significant reduction in use of bank and agency spend, and also target hot spots such as other areas of concern that needed addressing. The data was used to create reports for the chief executive and trust board, highlighting the positive impact the changes to process and procedures were having.

The mix of experts on the team was invaluable, as the insight from different areas meant the team could test ideas and processes before implementation to make sure that they met the needs of clinical service provision and project objectives without having a negative impact on other teams or departments. Where it was felt there could be a negative impact, the project diverted resources to support those teams in the short or long term, to ease the burden. Clinical incident reports were also closely monitored to make sure that the changes did not impact the provision of safe patient care to any patients or service users.

The positive impact of the work was evident within eight weeks, with forecast spend on agency **reduced significantly by 20 per cent, without compromising the safe staffing targets and patient care**. Long term, for this financial year the team delivered an agency spend under-forecast and within the Monitor four per cent ceiling. At the start of the project this seemed impossible, with forecast spend around the 12 per cent mark.

Gemma Leach, e-roster project manager, said: "The project team was the steam roller of the project, constantly following up on work streams, providing twice-weekly progress reports, questioning and challenging ways of working, seeking out new ideas, reviewing process and procedure against the national agenda - literally never giving up on the four per cent agency cap target. The changes the team implemented have been embedded and the trust continues to meet the requirements of NHS Improvement and Monitor. Directors from all areas regularly ask for information directly from HealthRoster, something that rarely happened previously, and it is now business as usual to question and challenge the areas that result in agency spend."