

Allocate Awards 2019

Winner: Innovative Workforce Models For Better Patient Care

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

Creation of a rapid response initiative improved staff satisfaction, quality of care and reduced agency usage

East and North Hertfordshire Trust's safer staffing team set up the rapid response initiative, a central staffing hub with oversight of the whole trust's staffing position, using SafeCare.

The rapid response initiative supports safe staffing, reduces the impact of short-notice drop out, improves flexible working options, reduces agency usage, and promotes the migration of agency staff to join the bank.

Previously, there were difficulties when staff moved to different wards to mitigate staffing challenges, with both workers and managers finding the process stressful and upsetting. The trust also relied heavily on agency staff in cases of short-notice drop out. Quality and safety were compromised because of the high number of agency staff; ward managers had little oversight of how many agency staff were being used and the consequences for their quality of care and budgets.

The rapid response pool was created to ease this. It is a temporary staffing pool with a limited number of shifts offered at an enhanced pay rate. There are also flexible hours to encourage staff with childcare commitments to take these shifts. The initiative supports having a

flexible, multi-skilled workforce, as staff can increase their experience and exposure to a variety of wards.

Rapid response shifts were originally managed via NHS Professionals, but there was limited oversight of bookings and redeployment.

In December 2018, the trust created a rapid response pool ward on the health roster to allow greater visibility and management of these shifts via SafeCare.

There was concern that the enhanced bank rate could discourage workers from picking up a standard shift. However, rapid response shifts are limited, and ongoing cost reviews have given assurance that the increase in shift options at higher rates and fill is controlled and measured.

Through this initiative, the trust aims to have no agency staff at weekends. Surgical wards are currently free of agency staff, and there is a strict executive approval process before going out to agency. There has also been a reduction in the redeployment of substantive staff, which has improved satisfaction and retention. Planned weekly and monthly look-ahead meetings monitor and control agency allowance and rapid response shifts required, in line with operational shortfall.

Emily Watts, safer staffing matron, said:

"We now have happy staff and happy managers, resulting in happy patients. The pool has been a key initiative in supporting agency reduction and has resulted in a number of agency nurses migrating to bank."



East and North Hertfordshire Trust's safer staffing team accept the Allocate Award for Innovative Workforce Models For Better Patient Care