

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

Targets 20% efficiency savings by 2015 with SMART eRostering and Time & Attendance



Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust (GHNFT) is a major employer and health services provider in the North East. The Trust is using SMART eRostering and Time & Attendance across 3,500 staff including managers, clinical and non-clinical staff, to deliver significant cost savings and improve work-life balance. It expects to achieve 20% efficiency savings by 2015 and cost savings of £1.1million while maintaining quality of care, during the course of which, the system will pay for itself.

The project, which included the implementation of eRostering and Time & Attendance, delivered an impressive return on investment from a range of tangible and soft benefits. Most significant of which is an integrated workforce management framework that links seamlessly with the Trust's Electronic Staff Record (ESR) and payroll systems.

Brian Nicholson, Clinical Lead and Project Manager at GHNFT explains; "SMART Workforce Management has taken the Trust from a situation where we were relying totally on manual processes to a more automated management of staff deployment. This has saved many hours of resource, now released back to patient care. Staff and managers alike love the system for the visibility and fairness that it provides, the end result being more efficient management of our key resources and better care for our patients."

The Challenge

Before introducing an automated approach to workforce management, GHNFT relied on paper-based processes to record staff hours, manage sickness, absence requests, and administer a variety of shifts. Labour intensive, duplicated effort, lacked an audit trail and did not connect to the organisation's central ESR and payroll systems.

The Solution

GHNFT selected SMART integrated Workforce Management systems for all 3,500 staff together with biometric hand readers. Staff clock in and out, ensuring that hours are recorded accurately, and enabling timesheets to be completed automatically and information sent to ESR and payroll. Releasing valuable time back to patient care. Any discrepancies are identified quickly avoiding payroll errors.

Tracey Preece, Deputy Director of Finance comments; "One huge benefit of SMART is the interface with ESR which completely removes several layers of paperwork, manual input, possibility for errors and processing time for payroll staff. It gives me far greater confidence in the degree of accuracy of the pay expenditure we report to the Board and saves considerable time in payroll and financial management investigating variance in paper form. My payroll team love it, without exception!"

"In addition, there have seen considerable savings made by recovering overpayments and ensuring staff are working correct hours, meaning fewer additional bank shifts are needed. Our payroll costs are now more controlled than previously and to be able to report that to the Board is immensely important."

SMART Time & Attendance helps streamline the management of holidays, absence and time-off in lieu balances whilst eRostering provides efficient rosters that ensure that staff with the correct mix of skills and experience are on duty at all times. Staff can see in advance which shifts they will be working and are able to request shifts, which can help them to balance work with home commitments.

SMART has proved an enormous advantage to ward directorates and managers across the Trust, including high dependency areas such as critical care and theatre units. They benefit from the system's flexibility to manage a complex range of fixed and flexible shift patterns covering acute 24-hour services, Monday-to-Friday services, and those that require extensive out-of-hours availability.

These benefits have been particularly appreciated at ward level, where the SMART system has significantly reduced time consuming paperwork for Ward Managers as they manage staff rosters.

"The SMART workforce management system has enabled us to improve our levels of organisation of staff. Rosters are produced much more in advance, giving us more opportunity to plan ahead. As well as rationalising times when 'off-duties' are published, we are now in the process of standardising shift patterns, which will give us even more efficiencies.

SMART saves us time, and if we are saving time for the ward managers and nurses, ultimately that means that patients benefit."

Hilary Lloyd, Deputy Director of Nursing at GHNFT

The recording of hours worked, unplanned absences, study leave and sickness is now transparent and can be fairly tracked and managed.

Karen Haslem, Ward Manager, said; *“I love the SMART system and use it every day. Once rosters are planned there are always exceptions, however SMART makes it very easy to update exceptions where staff may have left early due to sickness or holiday. With SMART I can see everything at a glance. For staff the contracted hours are now fair and transparent, which helps morale.*

“I used to take attendance sheets and study records home to work on, now I use SMART. It’s definitely saved a lot of time, which enables me to spend more time with patients.”

Benefits

Automation – Time devoted to workforce management administration has fallen dramatically. In the critical care ward the process now takes a day rather than a week. Ward managers can create 6-week rosters at one go compared with a maximum 4-week roster before the introduction of SMART.

T&A/eRostering Integration –

Integration between the two systems further automates processes. Any unplanned absence is flagged automatically and can be dealt with swiftly.

Fairness and Transparency – the use of T&A with biometric hand readers ensures that recording of hours worked is 100% accurate.

Compliance – At a glance, managers can spot areas of bad practice and address them proactively.

The accuracy and visibility provided by the system helps GHNFT ensure compliance with European working time legislation. Any breaches are automatically flagged enabling the trust to take action.

Cost Savings – Cost reductions are achieved due to more efficient deployment of staff, less bank staff usage, less time spent on administration and accurate recording of hours. The Trust is confident it could potentially become self-funding thanks, in large part, to the steadfast commitment of Kronos to continual innovation in technology.

SMART provides a single, integrated workforce management platform that can be used in a variety of ways. As a strategic planning solution, it identifies areas where improvements can be made, leading to increased efficiencies and optimisation of staff resource.

SMART’s centralised system gives managers the ability to run reports easily accommodate organisational change within the Trust and respond to new legislation and initiatives.

Next is moving to unified workforce management system that managing both nursing and bank staff and potentially investing in new technology that manages nurse/patient acuity.

Lessons Learned – the experience of deploying SMART has given GHNFT a unique insight that will better serve the Trust and which it hopes to share with other NHS organisations. They include:

- **Driving the overall workforce management project is key: the appointment of a clinical lead is critical**
- **Communicate with staff at all levels and gain senior management buy-in**
- **Consider starting with smaller, less complex areas to promote quick wins**
- **Standardise shifts before rolling out a new workforce management system**
- **Ideally, implement eRostering and Bank management together**
- **Provide a roster policy with formal rules and processes**

Fast Facts

- **3,500 staff are covered by integrated T&A and eRostering**
- **Automation and ESR link has eradicated the need for manual timesheets and checking against actual hours worked**
- **Single system has created parity across the Trust and improved communication between managers and staff**
- **All records stored in one place with quick, easy reporting capabilities**
- **Accuracy of data has eliminated payroll errors and overpayments**
- **Helps Trust adhere to EWTD, providing an auditable payment method and reduces fraud**

SMART is a workforce management solution widely used by the UK’s NHS across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. To learn more visit www.smart-rostering.co.uk.

Kronos acquired SMART in April 2012.

About Kronos Incorporated

Kronos is the global leader in delivering workforce management solutions in the cloud. Learn more at www.kronos.com

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