

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

Rolls out Kronos SMART workforce management solution to nurses in acute wards, A&E, and critical care

Ground-breaking staff engagement programme ensures successful roll out and system adoption



Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust was formed in April 2002 and today employs more than 7,000 clinicians and staff. Following the transfer of Sandwell's community health services in April 2011, the Trust now provides a range of acute and community services from Sandwell General Hospital in West Bromwich, City Hospital in Birmingham, Rowley Regis Community Hospital, and Leasowes Intermediate Care Centre. Community services are also provided in health and social care facilities across Sandwell and western Birmingham and in patients' homes.

The Trust recently implemented the Kronos SMART Workforce Management solution, gaining efficiencies through automation, reduced staffing costs, and improved work/life balance of staff.

The system has been successfully rolled out across 37 departments including A&E and critical care services, with plans to extend the SMART solution to all nurses as well as administrative staff and clinicians supporting community services.

The implementation of SMART, which has been supported by a comprehensive preparation and training programme for both management and staff, has contributed to the Trust's leadership structure, providing a clear indicator of the organisation's performance against targets relating to staff utilisation and costs.

"Having identified the requirement for eRostering, we were determined to get the absolute most from the system. To do this we needed to ensure that all staff members were trained to use the system correctly. The 17 week eRostering Roll-out programme of preparation and training has made a huge difference to the acceptance by staff. The programme ensured that they understood the changes that were coming and the reason behind the changes. As a result, the wards and departments now live on eRostering have a good understanding of the principles of workforce management as well as how to use the system to optimise the use of staff to safeguard patient care," said Gaynor Farmer, Special Projects Lead Nurse.

Fast Facts

- **SMART is supporting 1,400 nursing staff across 37 departments including A&E and critical care services**
- **Ground-breaking preparation and education programme and senior management support has ensured enthusiastic adoption of the new system by staff**
- **The Trust benefits from clear visibility of shifts and rosters, helping it to utilise its resources more effectively and cut down on bank staffing costs**
- **Improved efficiencies through automation**
- **Greater staff engagement through on-going support and training programmes**

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The Challenge

Prior to implementing the SMART solution, the Trust lacked accurate visibility of how many staff were being used and how their skills were being utilised. Keen to reduce spend on bank and agency staff but had little control over “headroom use” in the organisation. As a result, discrepancies in working hours existed that affected the work/life balance for nursing staff and potentially impacted the quality of patient care.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust needed to automate rostering and speed up the pay process by eradicating the requirement for timesheets and replacing the traditional, often error-prone, manual payroll system.

The Solution

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust selected SMART primarily for its ease of use, cost-effectiveness and unique features such as the Real-Time Hospital nurse/patient acuity functionality.

The Trust has completed the initial roll-out of SMART to departments across all acute wards including A&E and critical care services. The next stage is the implementation, and integration of absence and payroll, and introducing SMART Real-Time Hospital. Once that programme is successfully completed, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust plans to extend the SMART eRostering system to all nurses, administrators and clinicians supporting community services.

Key to the successful roll-out has been the sponsorship of senior management and the preparation and education programme designed to support the implementation. The programme comprised:

- 17 week eRostering Roll-out preparation programme with timetabled actions for the wards each week
- Training for managers/ward managers/matrons/band 6 nurses on the Principles of Workforce Management to ensure an overall understanding of why best practice rostering is so important
- 3 day eRostering course for managers/ward managers/matrons/band 6 nurses to ensure comprehensive understanding of the system and how to apply staffing/absence policy, and manage staffing budgets
- Training for staff on how to access their shift and holiday details, and how to make requests for leave and shift swaps

Benefits

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust has noticed a series of benefits since deploying SMART Workforce Management solutions.

Management Information

One central database holding real-time information has contributed significantly to the Trust’s ability to have an ‘at a glance’ view and report accurately on staff utilisation across the organisation. With all information in one place, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is using SMART to report on plans versus outcomes, introducing measurable KPIs against specific areas such as overall headroom, sickness leave, annual leave, study leave, maternity leave and special leave. Lead nursing staff and matrons are also benefiting from SMART’s ability to provide visibility of unfilled shifts, planned shifts and overfilled shifts to assign resources more efficiently and reduce bank spend.

“Over the last 12 months, we have stepped up investment in our leadership structure significantly. SMART gives us a clear indication of how we are using our staff against set objectives. It is an essential part of our quarterly review process, a powerful tool that drives our performance and adds strategic value to our profession and to the organisation as a whole,” added Gaynor Farmer, Special Projects Lead Nurse.

Staff Engagement - A shift in Culture

Staff engagement lies at the heart of Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (for which the Trust won an HSJ award in 2012) and SMART has encouraged greater collaboration between staff members. Buy-in from senior managers and chief nursing staff has been critical to the adoption of the system, resulting in best practice principles applied to ensure efficient use of staff while maintaining quality patient care.

Gaynor Farmer summarised, *“The deployment of SMART has realised technical and cultural advantages. Automation has streamlined the Trust’s processes and improved efficiencies and, moreover, the new solution has completely changed the Trust’s approach to the concept of workforce management. The programmes we have put in place to prepare each department for the new system, as well as the support and training given has, we believe, has significantly improved user adoption of the new system. This will ultimately lead to great efficiencies while safeguarding patient care.”*

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