

CASE STUDY - UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS BRISTOL AND WESTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

International recruitment partnership delivers hundreds of nurses to specialist areas

- ✓ More than **200** international nurses placed in under a year
- ✓ **100%** OSCE pass rate on their first attempt
- ✓ **100%** retention rate across all hired nurses
- ✓ NHSPI now **exclusively supporting** on all international recruitment for UHBW

The Situation

In the spring of 2021, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW) faced a recruitment challenge when it came to nursing, requiring approximately 40 posts to be filled. The main challenge arose as many of these roles were for specialist fields making domestic recruitment very difficult. NHSP International (NHSPi) were brought on board from April 2021 to support the Trust with an international recruitment solution with the aim to guide UHBW through the process as they had not undertaken international recruitment for a number of years. NHSPi formed a relationship with the Trust to support them with sourcing high quality candidates and advising on the processes and procedures involved, all whilst in the middle of a pandemic.

Some of the specialist areas UHBW were struggling to recruit for were included: Paediatric Theatres, General Paediatrics, Paediatric Oncology, Catheterisation Laboratory, Haematology/Oncology, Ophthalmology, Emergency, Scrub/Theatres, Respiratory, Medicine and Surgery.



The Solution

Following an in-depth discussion with key stakeholders from UHBW to fully understand the urgent requirements and demand, the NHSPI team put a tailor-made recruitment plan in place according to the Trust's needs for both Weston and Bristol Hospitals.

Specific interview dates were set in advance for each specialty to accommodate the Trust's interview panel members' busy schedules. Anticipating requirements and working in advance meant that the Trust had ample time to review all CVs ahead of time. This expedient way of working allowed the NHSPI team to book interviews and send offer letters in line with demand, shortening the timeframe from job acceptance to start to just four months.

NHSPI also took much of the administrative burden away from the Trust, managing the entire process and ensuring compliance from start to finish, requiring minimum resources and time from the Trust, while yielding exceptional results.

“Working with NHSPI has allowed us to concentrate on getting our pastoral support and training right for our nurses arriving – which are two of the most important bits! We don't have an infrastructure in place to support the volume of recruitment and intricacies that come with international recruitment (even down to booking flights and meeting our nurses at the airport) it is so beneficial to have NHSPI there to support us. They are true experts in their field, working with NHSPI is a true pleasure which I look forward to continuing this partnership.”

Hannah Parker,
International Nurse Recruitment Programme Lead at
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

In addition, the NHSPI team provided market-leading pastoral care to the international nurses arriving at UHBW, ensuring they were looked after pre and post arrival to the UK. NHSPI actively supported candidates with interview preparation, as well as their application and attendance to online webinars to prepare for their OSCE exams. NHSPI also covered all costs for relocation for the international candidates, meaning there was no financial burden for them when considering coming to work for the UHBW in the UK. Once they arrived, they were met with a 'meet and greet' service at the airport and, during the pandemic, all accommodation, transport and grocery shopping was also organised.

As part of the recruitment plan, NHSPI worked with UHBW to create a value proposition for attracting international candidates to South West England, promoting the area's unique benefits, lifestyle and community.

NHSPI maintained open lines of communication with the Trust throughout the process, ensuring they felt fully informed while navigating international recruitment. Virtual meetings were arranged on a weekly basis to discuss the progress of the recruitment project, with face-to-face meetings scheduled throughout the year when social distancing restrictions allowed. NHSPI ensured the Trust had full visibility of the in-progress candidates and pipeline with bi-weekly updates and comments for each nurse, which meant the Trust felt engaged and able to plan ahead for nurses who were arriving.

The Outcome

NHSPI successfully recruited for all specialist areas, filling the workforce gaps experienced by UHBW even in the most challenging subspecialties. NHSPI have placed more than 200 nurses for the Trust in just under a year, 100 of which now have their NMW Pin. Additionally, the calibre and dedication of the candidates was particularly evident as there has been a 100% retention rate across all hired nurses.

In addition, all international nurses passed their OSCE exams on their first attempt.

NHSPI continues to support the Trust with international recruitment and has a pipeline of over 100 active nurses arriving in 2022 with circa 60 more interviews taking place. One of the main benefits to the Trust was the minimum resources/time required at their end, meaning that UHBW senior staff were freed up for other priorities as NHSPI completed the recruitment of international nurses. Feedback from the Trust has been overwhelmingly positive, leading them to offer NHSPI exclusivity on all their international nursing recruitment (around 300 vacancies) and have even referred NHSPI to a neighbouring Trust which we are now supporting with recruitment for Allied Health Professionals.

The partnership is going from strength to strength with overall vacancies rates having reduced at the Trust and recruitment plans are continuously updated and refreshed to meet demand in a changing post-pandemic landscape.