



Helping Devon Partnership NHS Trust deliver a safe temporary workforce

Trust Overview

Devon Partnership NHS Trust was established in 2001 and serves a large geographical area with a population of more than 850,000. They work closely with other health and social care providers to support people with mental health and learning disability needs and, at any one time, are supporting almost 18,000 people across Devon and Torbay.

"I was on the initial interview panel and it's been fantastic to be part of the programme. As a manager, it's useful to get the continuity of one person working regular shifts. The continuity far outweighs the cost in terms of efforts and time. I'm really proud of what we have achieved and I would say it's an obvious choice for any other Trust. It's been hugely rewarding."

Emma Gillard – Ward Manager, Holcombe Ward

NHS Professionals (NHSP) was selected by the Trust in 2006 to support its temporary workforce. Since then, NHSP has been responsible for recruiting and ensuring compliance of temporary nursing staff on the bank, managing assignment requests through the NHSP:Online platform, and advising the Trust on appropriate use of staffing agencies to support the trust's workforce agenda.

"During the interview we can usually tell where people will be best suited to work in the Trust.

"We have the opportunity to move people across different roles. The trainees get a real opportunity to experience what happens on different wards and it helps people go on to be a really good asset for the Trust, with great care skills."

Emma Gillard – Ward Manager, Holcombe Ward

The problem

The Trust had been experiencing an increase in both demand for their service and in the number of vacancies to support the people using its services and needed to increase the size of its temporary flexible workforce to continue to provide the right level of care. In particular, additional care support staff were needed to work through the bank and to be available to work across all services.

"It's worked really well for both the trainees and my staff who buddy up with them. The recruitment process was excellent. It's been a very positive experience and I don't have any hesitation in recommending it."

Matt Perryman – Ward Manager, Cofton Ward

The solution

NHS professionals maintain on-going recruitment for the Trust. However, the challenge for the trust and NHSP alike was the lack of supply of experienced care support workers across the peninsula with mental health experience.

In an endeavour to support the Trust with innovation, NHSP proposed a programme which has been delivering care support workers to its acute trust clients for some years. It was agreed with the Trust to introduce a Mental Health focused pilot scheme to test the effectiveness of recruiting from scratch and training individuals with transferable skills as mental health care support workers. The trust worked with NHSP to develop a specific mental health training programme.

"Because the trainees work continuously, they very quickly become an asset for the ward. When you're teaching someone new you have to really think about those skills that you use instinctively and might not have revisited in years."

Matt Perryman – Ward Manager, Cofton Ward

"I was looking for an opportunity and had a genuine personal interest in mental health. It's been a great opportunity for me and I'm really looking forward to being able to explore other services across the Trust when my training is complete. I get a lot of support from all the nurses on the ward."

Mosa Bluejay, NHSP:Springboard Programme Trainee on Holcombe Ward

NHSP:Springboard

Carefully selected and screened candidates are expected to complete the online eLearning modules as part of the normal NHSP recruitment process. They are then placed on a two week induction course run by the trust to include specialist training along with familiarisation of trust policies and practices.

"The partnership element of the programme has been the real driving force. Both the wards and candidates feel part of an integral team. The Trust has agreed a rolling programme. Collectively, we've delivered a successful mental health training programme for care support workers".

Jules Shanbury Client Relationship Manager South West and Sally Garrett Trust Liaison Co-Ordinator

During the induction, unit managers from each speciality are given the opportunity to come and talk about the work of their unit. The trainees are then allocated to one of the units under the supervision of the unit manager with each being allocated a mentor from among the unit's experienced staff.

"The programme is really valued and a real demonstration of close partnership working. It's been energising and definitely an opportunity not to be missed."

Michelle Thomas, Safer Staffing & Bed Capacity Manager, eRoster Lead & NHSP Trust Lead

Results

Retention rate from the training is high (around 90%) and most candidates have since gone on to take up substantive posts with the Trust.

Not surprisingly, units involved with the training programme are keen to support future candidates, as they too have benefited directly from this programme.

"The ward team really likes having the continuity of care from a single person working five shifts a week. The structured programme gives us consistency and the candidate benefits from a supported placement. The ward benefits from quality and safety developments because the programme has been 'locally grown'. We've been able to mould the candidates to meet the Trust standards and expectations".

Michelle Thomas, Safer Staffing & Bed Capacity Manager, eRoster Lead & NHSP Trust Lead

As of December 2014, a second cohort is in training, and based on the success of these two programmes, a rolling programme of training is planned to include both specialist units and areas not previously included in the programme going forward.

"Retention is excellent and many are keen to explore other opportunities across the Trust when they graduate. The secure unit can be testing for some and one trainee who requested a transfer is now thriving in another unit."

Michelle Thomas, Safer Staffing & Bed Capacity Manager, eRoster Lead & NHSP Trust Lead

Next Steps

NHS Professionals is now working with a number of other Mental Health Trust clients to extend the successful programme to other areas across the country.

"It's been an excellent programme to be involved with and I would really recommend it for other trusts looking to develop skills with local people, some of the candidates have also chosen to pursue further nursing study, and continue to pick up NHSP shifts in different areas within the Trust to increase their knowledge base."

Michelle Thomas, Safer Staffing & Bed Capacity Manager, eRoster Lead & NHSP Trust Lead