

Case Study:

International Nurse Recruitment



EU nurses bring skills and experience

Trust Overview

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) provides services to over 2.5 million residents of Nottingham and its surrounding communities. It also provides specialist services for a further 3-4 million people from across the region.

NUH is one of the largest employers in the region, employing around 14,500 people at its three hospital sites - Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham City Hospital and Ropewalk House. It has a national and international reputation for many of its specialist services, including stroke, renal, neurosciences, cancer services and trauma.

"I think we're lucky as we have a very good Client Relations Manager and an excellent Trust Liaison Coordinator. NHS Professionals and the Trust work very closely together, very collaboratively. Both our aims are to provide high quality patient care. We have a professional, efficient working relationship."

Kerry Bloodworth – Assistant Director of Nursing, NUH

The Problem

Kerry Bloodworth, Assistant Director of Nursing, NUH explains why her Trust implemented the EU nursing programme: "Like any other Trust, we've found that it's getting harder and harder to recruit experienced nurses because there aren't enough numbers going through to universities at the moment. Now that our local university has changed to an all graduate curriculum, it's meant that we only have one cohort of nurses coming through the university every year. We used to have two or three in previous years so there were more nurses available throughout the year. Although we still have the same number they're all coming out at the same time, which means we end up carrying vacancies for longer."

"It's very easy from our side, we just turn up. The recruitment process that NHS Professionals goes through with us ensures that the nurses are fully competent and have a good command of the English language. The whole process including the NMC pin numbers is done through NHS Professionals, so for us, NHSP carry the risk in a way and we gain all the benefits."

Kerry Bloodworth – Assistant Director of Nursing, NUH

"NHSP encourage the nurses to introduce themselves to their ward manager before they start on the wards. I met Pedro a week before he started on the ward."

Helen Chilton - Ward Sister, Health care of older people at NUH

The Solution

NUH appointed NHS Professionals in 2008 to manage its bank service. More recently it has been working in partnership to successfully implement NHS Professionals' EU nursing programme, responding to an unprecedented growth in demand that outstrips supply.

The EU nursing programme requires a strong partnership between NHS Professionals and its partner Trusts to ensure the continued availability of good quality candidates to address demand and support recruitment into substantive posts. This results in a mutually beneficial outcome for the Trust and the candidates.

"When I first arrived at Nottingham, NHS Professionals held an integration lunch where we got to meet lots of people from the hospital and other nurses. It was such a nice idea as it made us feel important and valued as health professionals. NHS Professionals is always sending us emails to check everything is alright and continuously ask for our feedback. The communication is great and makes us feel very supported. Everyone was very welcoming and always offered their help."

A. Afonso – Registered Nurse at NUH

"Before Pedro joined the Trust, he did a week's induction with all of the nurses who came over from Portugal. This covered an acute care skills day, as well as the Trust's corporate induction, which NHSP organised in conjunction with the practice development team at the Trust. Once they had completed this they were free to start on the ward the following week."

Helen Chilton - Ward Sister, Health care of older people at NUH

EU Nursing

Most of NHS Professionals' EU candidates will have completed a four year BSc Degree. This incorporates a final pre-registration, nine month clinical placement programme, similar to the UK post-registration preceptorship programme.

"The other nurses have been really supportive and very positive about having nurses from Portugal. They have gained a hard working member of the team who has integrated well onto the ward. From a patient perspective, they want someone who is going to be kind and communicative with them. They often don't question the skills of healthcare professionals, they just want us to care for them and make them feel safe."

Kerry Bloodworth – Assistant Director of Nursing, NUH

Candidates are interviewed in their home country jointly by the Trust and NHS Professionals.

Prior to the candidates' arrival at the Trust, NHS Professionals provides a thorough orientation and induction in partnership with the Trust. This covers elements such as clinical skills review, an introduction to the Trust and NHS Professionals' mandatory training.

"For the first four weeks Pedro wasn't classed as a staff nurse, he was working alongside somebody all the time while he learnt about the routine on the wards. He had the knowledge and knew how to look after sick patients, he just needed to get up to speed on the different equipment we use and how we do things on the ward, which is always the hardest part."

Helen Chilton - Ward Sister, Health care of older people at NUH

Other nurses on the ward and most importantly patients have all given very positive feedback on the Portuguese nurses they have worked with or been treated by. At the end of the one year placement, candidates may continue to work through NHS Professionals or apply for a substantive post at the Trust if there is one available.

"One of the reasons we like to recruit from Portugal so much is because feedback has told us the Portuguese nurses were very caring and compassionate and they can provide efficient care for our patients."

Kerry Bloodworth – Assistant Director of Nursing, NUH

"I have just applied for a permanent position at the hospital but will remain as an NHS Professionals bank worker so I can pick up extra shifts."

A. Afonso – Registered Nurse at NUH

Results

NUH has successfully recruited 39 Portuguese nurses over three cohorts, with all bar one of the first cohort currently transferring to become substantive NUH staff.

Like many Trusts across the country the Portuguese nurses have helped plug a gap in permanent vacancies and have reduced the reliance on agencies to fill shifts.

"Our ward wouldn't have been able to fill vacancies without the Portuguese nurses. It's very hard to attract staff, particularly on the elderly ward because it's so difficult. Some of the wards have four Portuguese nurses and these posts would still be vacant if the nurses weren't here."

Helen Chilton - Ward Sister, Health care of older people at NUH

NHS Professionals gives the nurses the flexibility to do their placements on different wards or even move to a different Trust across the country if they aren't enjoying living in a certain area. However, this is uncommon with candidate retention higher than 90% and many of the nurses have recommended the programme to others in their home countries.

"Our demand has gone up and up, so although the programme hasn't necessarily reduced our agency spend, we undoubtedly would have spent more on agency nurses without the EU programme"

Kerry Bloodworth – Assistant Director of Nursing, NUH

Next Steps

NUH has committed to taking on further cohorts of EU nurses in partnership with NHS Professionals over 2015, with three cohorts arriving in spring. Like most Trusts, NUH is recruiting from other European countries to meet demand and will be taking on 40 Italian nurses in the upcoming months as well as a further 14 Portuguese nurses. The Italian nurses undertake a three year degree programme that is recognised by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in the UK, which allows them to easily register and practice.