

# Barnsley takes control of agency spend

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Average bank hours each month increased by more than **50%**
- ✓ Trust bank increased by **70%**, with more than **60** people joining the bank each month

### The Trust

Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust provides a full range of district hospital services for over a quarter of a million people in the Barnsley area, caring for more than 61,000 patients in more than 350 beds.

The Trust has recently joined the NHSP Bankshare® arrangement with “Working Together”, the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System that incorporates nine NHS Trusts, with all six acute Trusts supported by NHS Professionals (NHSP).

More than 7,000 people working across the group, including 3,000 registered nurses, have visibility of all available bank shifts across the six Trusts. The Bankshare® arrangement prohibits any staff registered on the bank from working through staffing agencies at any of the Trusts involved.

### The challenge

Prior to engaging with NHSP in 2018, the nursing bank at the Trust was operated by a small internal team that reported through operations. Bank recruitment was inconsistent, compliance with necessary training requirements wasn't well

*“There was a vague agency cascade process in place, but it had no real controls over which agencies were used. Thornbury was selected as an ‘agency of last resort’ but fairly soon we found that they were filling 90% of agency shifts at great expense.”*

**Abigail Trainer**  
Deputy Director of Nursing (operations),  
Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

understood and the investigation of complaints and incidents wasn't robust. The Trust spend on expensive agency staff was very high, operated at ward level and largely invisible, apart from the large invoices.

NHSP started managing the nursing bank at the Trust in October 2018 with a clear remit to address these issues. The NHSP implementation process met with some initial resistance from unions and staff who were anxious about the change. The Trust also identified some unexpected impacts that had to be resolved, such as the control of issue of smart cards.



I would say that NHSP has had a very significant impact at the Trust. One year on, we have absolute control of agency use, assurance over governance and a robust complaints process. We have saved a significant amount on agency spend, but we still have more to achieve with our agency use

Abigail Trainer

Deputy Director of  
Nursing (operations),  
Barnsley Hospital NHS  
Foundation Trust

### Key Initiatives



Trust has complete control on agency use



Incentives introduced to reward extra shifts filled by bank staff



Recruitment drive to grow the bank amongst substantive staff and agency workers

### The outcome

The NHSP team analysed and developed local plans to address the bank and agency needs of each staff group. Rates were negotiated with all the agencies and an automatic agency cascade process was introduced to ensure best value and performance for the Trust. Ward level controls ensured that only key individuals could approve agency use and escalation to more expensive agencies.

Agency hourly rates have been reduced by an average of 10% and agency hours worked reduced by more than half. Any bank member takes priority over agency workers and NHSP technology enables bank to 'bump' an agency booking to work a shift and Trust policy has been updated to prevent staff from working through agencies at their home Trust. Following the change in bank pay and introduction of agency controls in April 2019, agency complaints have decreased by two thirds.

### Bank recruitment

To grow the bank, NHSP implemented a proactive recruitment drive that included a promotional campaign highlighting the benefits of working bank shifts.

In partnership with the Trust, a pay strategy was agreed to support reduction in agency use. By August 2019, just ten months later, membership of the Trust bank had grown by 70%, with more than 60 people joining the bank each month.

To support proactive, multi-disciplinary care of patients through an integrated workforce solution, the Trust AHP bank, built on the experience of the nursing bank, is now working very well. AHP bank workers can now see all of the available shifts in their field of work.

### Incentives

A winter incentive was introduced in recognition of the extra shifts filled by bank staff. This ensured that they were adequately rewarded with a bonus payment for working additional hours during a very busy period for the Trust. An incentive was also implemented for AMU as a reflection of the complexity of the work being undertaken in that department.

Average hours worked by the bank each month has grown by more than 80% in ten months.

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"Prior to NHSP I would try to clear my diary as much as possible as the full 8 hours would be spent dealing with staffing issues across the Trust. This has very much been relieved now, with fill rates being much improved!"

The governance behind bank and agency workers is much improved, knowing where staff have worked and been moved to has improved greatly. Investigation of incidents is much more streamlined.

Overall NHSP I feel has been an extremely positive move for the Trust"

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**Elizabeth Dunwell**

Matron, Barnsley Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust