

## CASE STUDY

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

# Agency usage completely removed for Healthcare Support Worker staff group at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

- ✓ Agency use for HCSWs reduced to 0%
- ✓ Cost savings of £30,000 per month
- ✓ £2.25 per hour saved on average for HCSWs

### The Situation

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust currently provides the widest range of NHS mental health services in the UK and serves a local population of 1.3 million people. In May 2020, NHS Professionals launched a campaign to work with the Trust to remove Healthcare Support Worker (HCSW) agency use. At the time, Bank fill fluctuated between 95-96% and agency fill was around 2-3%. We identified that agency usage was isolated to Greenvale Ward, which specialised in caring for older adults. Our Trust Services team designed an agency cascade solution for the mental health Trust, prioritising the need to minimise disruption and provide a seamless transition throughout.



#### The Solution

Our first step was to build strong relationships with Greenvale's ward managers so we could learn more about the unique demands of the ward and could match the right Bank Members to the required roles. This gave our Services team deeper insights into the ward's culture and environment and the need for committed, experienced and proactive candidates. As a result, we were able to give the Trust extra assurances that our Bank Members would deliver consistent, reliable and high-quality care for service users.

With relationships established, our Services team set to work tightening up the existing agency cascade, so agency use remained isolated to one ward. The team also worked with managers to modify booking behaviours to make sure shifts were visible and put out with sufficient lead time. This maximised our ability to attract our Bank Members to the available shifts, before going to an agency worker.

To incentivise the Bank, we created bespoke engagement and attraction initiatives and targeted advertising towards experienced individuals wanting weekday work. We also used our experience with other comparative Trusts to recommend putting out HCSW shifts with a general code to widen the net of workers and co-ordinated with the Trust to provide older adults' care training to help retain and upskill regular Bank Members.

Lastly, we nurtured positive working relationships with other wards and areas around the Trust. This meant we could incentivise Bank Members working in other areas to undertake shifts on Greenvale Ward. Not only did this support Greenvale, it also gave existing Bank Members the opportunity to work more flexibly and gain new training, skills and experience in a different ward for their own professional development.

Our final step was to supplement all these activities with a project to migrate experienced agency workers over to the Bank to ensure continuity of care.

#### The Outcome

Thanks to our strong collaboration with the Trust, HCSW agency use has been 0% since October 2022. In addition, the partnership has produced cost savings of approximately £30,000 per month, with the Trust saving an average of £2.25 per hour for HCSWs.

The agency migration and upskilling initiatives have meant that the continuous service and relationships with users has not been disrupted and we have been able to achieve a seamless transition. Improved booking behaviours have also resulted in better shift visibility and an increase in shift lead time from six to ten days. Bank Members are now able to book shifts further ahead, resulting in safer staffing levels and greater flexibility and career progression opportunities helping to support retention.

*"The NHS Professionals Trust Services Team visited Greenvale to understand the environment and the work that we were involved in and also listened to our concerns before agreeing on plans that could be implemented to help us gain greater budgetary control."*

*"At no time did it feel the team was not invested in supporting Greenvale with meeting the challenges involved with securing Bank cover. Team members were consistently available by telephone, email and also via Microsoft Teams and were encouraging and supportive, which promoted a positive working relationship."*

*"The support we've had has overall brought a greater intervention to manage shift demands on the unit and at the same time reduced expensive agency cost over the years. We have also achieved a better outcome from the partnership with regular meetings with the Unit Manager and the Clinical Service Manager to discuss the gaps in safer staffing and jointly put plans in place to ensure as many shifts as possible are fulfilled by NHS Professionals instead of going to agency. The benefits include how the Trust Services team organised training and ensured all bookings were placed through the NHS Professionals interface rather than multiple platforms, giving us more visibility. The team also came with suggestions on different approaches to fill the safer staffing gaps and this all helped in maintaining patient safety while minimising agency cost."*

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