

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE AND WEAR NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

Meeting Date: 26 July 2017

Title and Author of Paper: Safer Staffing Quarter 1 Report (April – June, 2017) and Six Monthly Skill Mix Review

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Executive Lead: Gary O'Hare – Executive Director of Nursing and Operations

Paper for Debate, Decision or Information: Information

Key Points to Note:

The Trust continues to comply with the requirements of safer staffing.

There is a continued decrease in the use of Bank and Agency staff within Inpatient Wards.

Since the last Board report (February 2017) workforce plans and skill mix have continued to be reviewed and are subject to close monitoring and scrutiny by service line taking into account demographic profiles, investment, service developments and transformation. Most importantly changes in clinical need influence staffing levels on a daily basis across the Trust.

Appended to this report is the feedback from the reflection session held by members of the Trustwide Value Based Recruitment and Retention Group.

Risks Highlighted to the Board: None

Does this affect any Board Assurance Framework/Corporate Risks? NO

Please state Yes or No

If Yes please outline

Equal Opportunities, Legal and Other Implications: N/A

Outcome required:

Trust Board to receive for information and assurance.

Monthly returns are also considered at the Trust Quality and Performance meeting and the Business Delivery Group.

Links to Policies and Strategies: N/A

Safer Staffing Quarter 1 Report (April – June 2017) and
Six-Monthly Skill Mix Review

Shining a light on the future



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide the Trust Board with information analysis and assurance in relation to three key areas of nursing staffing:

- Compliance with safer staffing requirements;
- The ratio of qualified and unqualified nursing staff in substantive, bank and agency and usage within the ward areas;
- Six monthly skill mix review and analysis of current staffing matters.

SAFER STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

In November 2013 guidance was produced by NHS England to optimise nursing, midwifery and care staffing capacity and capability. Research demonstrates that staffing levels are linked to the safety of care and that staff shortfalls increase the risks of patient harm and poor quality care. Patients and the public have a right to know how the hospitals they are paying for are being run, and so the Government has made a number of commitments in Hard Truths (now known as Safer Staffing): The Journey to Putting Patients First to make this information more publically available.

The commitments were:

- To publish staffing data from April 2014;
- A Board report describing the staffing capacity and capability, following an establishment review, using evidence based tools where possible. To be presented to the Board every 6 months;
- Information about the nurses, midwives and care staff deployed for each shift compared to what has been planned and this is to be displayed at ward level;
- A Board report is made available containing details of planned and actual staffing on a shift by shift basis at ward level for the previous months. To be presented to the Board every 3 months;
- The quarterly report must also be published on the Trust's website, and Trusts will be expected to link or upload the report to the relevant hospital(s) web page on NHS Choices.

Boards must, at any point in time, be able to demonstrate to their commissioners that robust systems and processes are in place to assure themselves that the nursing, midwifery and care staffing capacity and capability in their organisation is sufficient to provide safe care implementing the National Quality Board staffing guidance and that, where there are risks to quality of care due to staffing, actions are taken to minimise the risk.

The Care Quality Commission will be looking for compliance with all the actions as part of their inspection regime. NHS Improvement will act where the Care Quality Commission identifies any deficiencies in staffing levels in Foundation Trusts.

NTW has adopted a robust application of the guidance including:

- An agreed methodology is in place incorporating both the electronic and paper rostering systems to gather the staffing information in a systematic manner;
- RAG system is in place to alert Group Nurse Directors of any wards that have deviated from the agreed staffing levels;
- Ward Manager report on a weekly basis highlighting any variance and reasons why on the planned staffing for their ward;
- The information is collated to support analysis of ward staffing;
- A Clinical Nurse Manager who oversees the process and escalates as required to service and director leads;
- Safer staffing is discussed and monitored at ward/service group and trust meetings.

Reporting for April to June 2017

- 3 wards were within the agreed ranges;
- 18 wards had qualified staff under 90%, with a further 4 wards under 80%. Reasons for understaffing were due to changes in the qualified ratio and vacancies being supplemented with experienced unqualified staff;
- In addition to the above, 1 ward had unqualified staff under 90% with a further 3 wards under 80%. This was due to a change in clinical need;
- 22 wards had staffing above 120% which was due to increased clinical activity, ranging from 120.31% to 292.75%. Of these, 4 had staffing over 200%.

RATIO OF QUALIFIED AND UNQUALIFIED NURSING STAFF IN SUBSTANTIVE, BANK AND AGENCY, AND USAGE WITHIN THE WARD AREAS

Substantive, Bank and Agency Nursing Use

The cost of temporary staffing, particularly for nurses and doctors, presents a challenge for most trusts. Fundamentally, this is because there is a supply gap across many professional groups in the system. NTW is committed to reducing reliance on agency and bank staff whilst maintaining safer staffing requirements. NHS Improvement have developed a diagnostic tool to identify potential steps to move towards best practice and reduced costs, following a national assessment that showed that the approach to managing temporary staffing varies. In those that manage it well NHS Improvement has typically seen:

- Greater control when technology supports roster and bank services;
- A large, flexible cohort of bank staff exists;
- A strong procurement team in place;
- Detailed management information empowering decision making;
- Operational Managers, Clinicians, HR and Finance work together in a joined up team to manage workforce challenges.

Following the guidance issued by NHS Improvement in August 2015, the Trust has reviewed the levels of nursing agency spend and are well within the 3% threshold. As a result of being below the threshold there is no specific action required by NHS Improvement, however the Trust will continue to measure performance against this target via the Trustwide Bank and Agency Review Group.

- 6.53% of qualified staffing was covered by bank staff and 0.10% by agency staff. This is a decrease of 1.14% bank and a decrease of 0.55% on agency from the previous report. This decrease is due to staff moving to permanent posts;
- 14.08% of unqualified staffing was covered by bank staff with 4.13% by agency staff. This is a decrease of 3.08% on bank usage and an increase of 0.51% on agency usage respectively from the previous report and continues a mostly downward trend in the use of bank and agency staffing.

SIX MONTHLY SKILL MIX REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STAFFING MATTERS

Trustwide Value Based Recruitment and Retention

Members of the Trustwide Value Based Recruitment and Retention Group held a reflection session to consider:

- What Value Based Recruitment set out to achieve;
- What were the associated risks of this approach;
- What worked well;
- What were the critical success factors;
- Steps for further improvement;
- The current position;
- Next steps.

(The slides are appended for information.)

In summary it is considered organizationally that Value Based Recruitment and Retention has:

- Helped NTW Trust achieve a stronger position in terms of Nursing, AHP, Administrative and Temporary staff;
- Streamlined, made more efficient and achieved consistency in recruitment approaches and standards;
- Ensure only people are recruited to the organisation who have the right values and attitudes;
- Enabled a holistic view of workforce risks through central management of recruitment, alternative employment, staff at risk and internal transfers.

The proposals are to not change this approach going forward, although given the Trusts strong position with no vacancies and appropriate temporary cohorts in flexi pool and bank, smaller localised campaigns will be needed going forward.

There will be no detracting from the “Value Based Approach” and there will be robust quality assurance in relation to the fidelity to the model.

There will continue to be opportunities to build on successes achieved to move into future recruitment using creativity, collaboration and consistency, share what has been learnt in NTW with other organisations and also to promote best practice.

Pathways into Nursing and Enhancing the Workforce

- Pre-Nurse Education Programme

Over the last two years NTW Trust has supported 8 participants through the above. This provides those interested in Nursing who have little or no health care experience with a year's experience as a Healthcare Assistant.

Five of those completing the programme have now commenced Nurse training and a further 2 have places to start training in September 2017. Interviews have taken place in July 2017 for individuals interested in this programme with the Trust this year and a further 3 have been successfully recruited. These would potentially start Nurse training in September 2018.

This provides a valuable alternative pathway into Nurse Training.

- North East Trainee Nursing Associate Pilot Update

The Shape of Caring Review published in March 2015, made a series of recommendations to strengthen the capacity and skills of the Nursing and Caring Workforce. In December 2015, the Government announced plans to create a new intermediate Nursing Associate role to support the Registered Nurse Workforce in providing high quality person centred care across health and social care settings.

Following the identification of the Test Site Partnerships, NTW Trust became a 'fast follower' and has 13 individuals undertaking training to become Nurse Associates which commenced April 2017. The Foundation Degree supporting their development is being delivered by Teesside University. Students have 1 day in University, 2 in an allocated clinical area and 2 days on clinical placement. Clinical placements include experience in the hospital setting, nearer home and at home.

An essential part of their role will be in the Administration of Medicines and these Nursing Associates will also be regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Further clarity is awaited nationally regarding regulation and medicine proficiencies; however these standards will be nationally agreed.

It is envisaged that Nursing Associates will:

- Supplement, augment and complement the care given by Registered Nurses;

- Build the capacity and capability of the health and social care workforce;
- Widen access and entry to the Nursing Profession;
- Support career progression enabling a greater skill mix in the workforce to work flexibly and responsibly.

However these benefits can only be realised if required competencies and proficiencies are clear and that from a governance perspective there is robust regulation. Whilst supporting the 13 staff who have commenced, these areas are the focus of NTW work at the moment.

Workforce Developments and Role Extensions

- Non Medical Approved Clinicians

There are a number of Senior Non Medical Clinicians across the Trust from Nursing and Psychology who have trained to take on the 'Approved Clinician' role.

These critical personnel have been used flexibly to be deployed into areas where there are challenges and difficulties in relation to Medical Recruitment. In particular these clinicians are used across Clinical Pathways. Going forward with the new management arrangements, this ability to flex and mobilise these resources, as determined by clinical and service need, must be ensured.

- Activity Workers

Activity Workers have an important part to play in supporting Multi-Disciplinary Teams to provide meaningful activity for service users. In a number of areas, the Activity Worker hours are being extended to facilitate both seven day working and extension of day time hours into the evenings. Although further evaluation is required, where seven day Activity Workers are in place, there has been an associated reduction of incidents at weekends.

Workforce Challenges

- Gender Mix

It has previously been highlighted in the February 2017 Skill Mix Review paper that one of the current workforce challenges is that of gender mix.

Male staff in the organisation are in a minority which can result in difficulties in meeting individual service user care preferences and privacy and dignity requirements.

Proactively, NTW is working with Northumbria Police in relation to the potential recruitment of retired or retiring police officers. The Trust is planning a bespoke targeted recruitment campaign in the near future specifically for these police officers.

- Service Changes
As Services are transformed these changes impact upon both staffing and skill mix and any impact on either is carefully risk assessed and monitored.

Recent proposals around Children and Young People Services in Alnwood will result in a number of staff requiring redeployment.

This is co-ordinated via the weekly Trustwide Value Based Recruitment and Retention meeting and to date staff are being successfully redeployed across the organisation.

Similarly in Inpatient, Specialist and Community Care Groups, implementation of financial delivery plans will impact on staffing numbers and skill mix. These changes are being successfully implemented, and suitable alternatives are being found. These changes are handled in a timely and pro-active way to minimize any anxiety in staff teams and in individual staff members.