

Developing an Effective Strategic Workforce Plan - Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Oxford University Hospitals Foundation NHS Trust (OUH) provides a wide range of general and specialised healthcare services and employs over 11,700 staff primarily across four hospital sites. It provides over 90 different clinical specialties which are grouped into 5 clinical divisions.

The challenge

The Trusts Human Resources department has historically produced workforce plans (WPs) in relative isolation from clinical services in response to a number of external drivers including NHS Improvement and Health Education Thames Valley (HETV). The plans developed provided a top down workforce numbers vision of their future workforce requirements.

OUH recognised this was not the most effective way of workforce planning; they needed to engage staff from across their divisions including clinicians, service and finance leads to explore the workforce options to support both sustainability and transformation in response to the challenges they were facing. They also needed to become more forward thinking and better prepared to ensure they have the workforce required to realise the future vision and aspirations of the organisation.

OUH approached Skills for Health to work with them to;

- Review their workforce planning processes, systems and data quality currently being used
- Facilitate the development of an OUH integrated 5 year WP (2016-2021) utilizing Skills for Health's Six Step Integrated Methodology for Workforce Planning
- Develop OUH bespoke tools to support the process and facilitate reiteration of the WPs on an annual basis
- Build the capacity and capability across the Divisions to effectively WP in the future.

The Trust's intention was that this would improve the sophistication and quality of its workforce planning processes to the future benefit of Clinical Commissioning Groups, HETV and OUH itself.

How they did it

Workforce Diagnostic

Skills for Health's consultants worked with OUH staff to:

- Assess the data systems used to record, monitor, audit, develop and report on the workforce position across the Trust using Skills for Health's workforce data diagnostic tools
- Interview a diverse range of staff from across the organisation using the Skills for Health Workforce Planning Diagnostic Framework to identify the Trust's current culture and capability around workforce planning

The information gathered from the diagnostics was used to develop a report identifying the WP challenges and barriers and to highlight areas of good practice. Key recommendations for areas of improvement were also made.

Developing the Integrated Workforce plan

Delivered through a facilitated workshop approach Skills for Health's utilised the Six Step Methodology for Integrated Workforce Planning with each Division to support them to develop their own WP over a period of 3 months.

Each Division was provided with a set of templates to capture the narrative and workforce numbers which formed the basis of their WP.

This approach ensured consistency across the organisation and enabled divisional workforce plans to be brought together into an overarching OUH integrated workforce plan. Divisional teams completing the work required between workshops with support from SFH as required.

Skills for Health also delivered webinars for the Divisional Human Resources Business Partners (HRBPs) to build their workforce planning knowledge and discuss issues and challenges as they arose.

Once all divisions had submitted their workforce numbers, Skills for Health brought the divisional plans together into an overarching workforce plan for OUH. Highlighting patterns of growth and development and providing analysis of the changes to the workforce that were in the WPs.

A final workshop with the HRBPs and the Deputy Director of Workforce and Organisational Development focussed on:

- Reviewing the collated OUH workforce plan and its projected effect on the workforce configuration over the next 5 years
- Bringing together the key workforce challenges
- Identifying the major service changes and the associated workforce implications
- Sharing of the workforce changes that have potential to improve productivity
- Areas of workforce innovation such as new role developments and new ways of working
- Cross organisational themes
- Next steps including drawing out interdependencies, validation, and quality assurance

The Outcomes

There have been a number of key outcomes from the project for OUH, these include;

- OUH has developed its first 5 year Integrated Workforce Plan with engagement from across all Divisions including clinical and service leads.
- Their current workforce plan has been developed to meet the needs of multiple stakeholders that require workforce plan information from the organisation including HETV, Trust Development Authority and Monitor.
- For the first time OUH have a workforce plan that is linked to service development, is based upon evidence of best practice in workforce utilisation and provides a clear rationale for change linking with their financial projections and assumptions.
- OUH has a workforce methodology and process that they are confident they can integrate into their annual planning cycle going forward
- The profile of workforce planning has been raised across the Trust with staff at a local level. Staff from a wide range of departments are now keen to engage with future WPs.
- The project has highlighted the importance of building upon the WP capacity and capability created by the project to ensure the learning can be cascaded and more staff can engage in future workforce planning exercises.
- Sharing Divisional Level WPs at a final workshop enabled identification of important areas of organisational interdependencies and enabled the identification of opportunities for further cross working and collaboration to develop effective workforce solutions.

'The outputs of the project have exceeded our expectations; it has enabled us to be in a position to embed workforce planning into the business planning cycle across the organisation. We also recognise the need to develop more capacity and capability in workforce planning in order to build upon the project and identify more areas where transformation of our workforce would be beneficial.'

Glyn Allington, Oxford University Hospitals Human Resources Lead - Workforce Information and HR Records