

FLEXIBLE SHIFT PATTERNS



Flexible Working success at Chapel Allerton Hospital - Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust



BACKGROUND

Flexible working has been introduced over several years at a complex rehabilitation ward at Chapel Allerton hospital, part of LTHT. The ward consists of 25 beds and has a staff team of 47.



SITUATION

The ward had a higher than usual number of vacancies which resulted in relying heavily on bank staff to fill shifts. Despite this, shifts were not always filled, particularly midweek, even though staff were willing to be flexible with the days they worked.



MYTHS/CHALLENGES

Some challenges were initially raised around staff handover if start and finish times varied to accommodate flexible shift patterns. However, Ward Manager Michelle Kemp found solutions to these challenges with no detriment to the service.



SOLUTION

The ward created more flexibility by changing some of the 'normal' shift times. For example, some shift start times were amended from 7.00am to 8.30am to assist with childcare in the morning. This change provided more cover as the shift ended at 4pm rather than 3pm. For late shifts, one member of staff now starts the late shift an hour earlier and leaves an hour later, which again assists with shift cross cover. Handovers were also recorded which allows for information to be shared at different start and finish times.



Jayne Davies, Matron and
Michelle Kemp, Senior Sister.



IMPACT

The change in flexibility of shifts has positively affected patient care because the ward is staffed safely. The impact on staff wellbeing by offering flexibility of shifts has been really positive and has supported workforce retention. Overall, the team ethos on this ward is incredibly strong due to the flexibility.

“Continuity of care for the patient can be impacted. However, I believe this to be minimal and well managed with a robust handover system in place which considers the nature of the cohort of patients”

Jayne Davies, Matron

LESSONS LEARNED

People do not need to give a reason for requesting flexible working, as an employer it is important that we recognise this and support staff where we can. The team implemented a robust handover system and continue to look at ways in which they can offer more flexibility to substantive and bank staff, such as looking to support some four-hour shifts from 10am – 2pm.

“The flexibility on the ward is due to Michelle Kemp, Ward Manager and her ability to see that flexibility for her staff is important. It has been implemented for a few years now with no detriment to the service and we are using this example to expand flexible working practises elsewhere due to the benefits seen by the patients, service and staff”

Jayne Davies, Matron

