



Case Study

Flexible Staff Bank

Bank and agency management
for all staffing groups

Results at a glance

- 97% average fill rate (10% increase)
- Fill increased amid rising demand (up 24%)
- 158% of savings target achieved
- 7% reduction in off-framework bookings
- Rates reduced to match new NWL rate card



“Litmus has rapidly transformed our staffing operation, consistently exceeding all KPI targets.

The detailed business insights they provide are enabling us to better manage risk and reduce staffing costs”

Associate Director of HR Operations



Background

The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (THH) delivers services to a population of over 350,000 across two hospital sites.

In March 2023, Litmus was awarded a contract (via NHS Workforce Alliance) to manage the Trust's Staff Bank and Temporary Staffing operations across all staffing groups. The service officially went live on 2 May 2023, following an efficient eight week implementation.

Key goals were to embed a 'bank first' strategy, improve fill rates and reduce spiraling staffing costs. With several ongoing staffing challenges, reactive booking behaviours had become prevalent, (e.g. offering escalated rates and booking direct with off-framework agencies). THH needed to strictly enforce new processes and rate policies, without impacting safe staffing levels.

Implementation

In line with Litmus's proven 'people-led' approach, implementation began with the development of an enhanced bank and temporary staffing team, based onsite and built to incorporate members of the existing Trust team (who were TUPE'd to Litmus).

New temporary staffing processes, rate cards and rostering best practices were then agreed and rolled out to all departments and work began to embed a firm 'bank first' approach.

A highly visible onsite presence was critical to success with the team visiting all departments and organising engagement days with NHS-branded giveaways, free cakes and drinks. The benefits of joining, and working closely with the bank team were promoted widely to substantive staff and managers, and relationships were quickly built to ensure buy-in to new processes.

Solutions and Outcomes

Recruitment and onboarding

Litmus built a dedicated white-label (NHS-branded) microsite and launched targeted candidate attraction campaigns across multiple channels, rapidly generating over 800 new bank-only applicants.

Shortages of mental health nurses were quickly tackled with targeted recruitment campaigns. Litmus is also working closely with the Trust to assess patient acuity ratios so rotas can be optimised to better match true demand and available resources. These activities have so far resulted in a 10% increase in mental health staff available via the Staff Bank.

Litmus is also supporting the Trust to onboard bank candidates more rapidly by facilitating group assessment days for HCAs, and by directly interviewing candidates for non-clinical roles.

Rate management and cost reduction

Bank and agency workers were successfully transitioned onto new lower rate cards (Pan-London and One-London), and Litmus has successfully reduced reactive booking behaviours with fewer direct bookings and a 7% reduction in bookings filled by off-framework agencies (from 9% to 2%). This has resulted in significant cost savings and to date, 158% of the agreed savings target in Year 1 has been achieved.

Actual Savings v Target Savings



Technology

Litmus implemented the new staff bank using the Trust's existing rostering technology (Allocate BankStaff), and optimised the use of Patchwork (already used in wider ICS). The Trust's Trac, L&D and ESR systems are also used to ensure full compliance with NHS Employer standards. Operational disruption was minimised throughout the implementation thanks to the strategic technology partnerships Litmus holds, and the advanced expertise Litmus staff have, integrating their proven processes with common third-party systems in NHS settings.

With rates harmonised and systems matching those used across the North West London Collaborative Bank, THH now has a more future-proof staffing operation that mirrors best practice.

A key focus on maximising bank resources has resulted in:

45%

of bank workers covering two or more specialties

Improved bank and agency management has resulted in:

97%

overall fill rate amid rising demand