



Plus Us & Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust: *Gaining oversight and control of the vital flexible workforce*

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provides community, mental health and learning disability services across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Trust serves a population of approximately 570,000 people.

Operating in a unique environment, covering 1,376 square miles, the Trust has to flex its workforce to accommodate winter pressures but also summer pressures due to the influx of holidaymakers.

The Trust had up to 5,000 employees and engaged 228,975 hours of agency resources in 2022/23 across 20 different sites. It therefore needed a partner that could help optimise the management of its temporary medical workforce and regain control of its agency staffing spend to secure efficiencies and maximise its budget.

The Challenge

The historic process for recruiting temporary medical staff relied on the use of spreadsheets, long email chains and multiple documents. Information including contracts, who was working where and when, and the associated costs were spread across several files and emails with no central information hub.

With emails used as the main form of communication, the Trust typically engaged with just three or four recruitment agencies. Added to this, 100% of workers were non-direct engagements (agency sourced), adding VAT to day rates and driving up costs.

These processes made finding information quickly and accurate reporting difficult. As a result, the Trust had limited visibility of its temporary medical workforce. The medical staffing team were working harder with files and key information siloed across multiple email accounts and computers.

In addition, sourcing talent was a challenge due to regular requests for specific roles based on the Trust's existing workforce model. These roles were often difficult to fill due to high demand amidst a nationwide shortage of medical professionals.

How Plus Us Helped

After exploring potential platform-based solutions, the Trust chose to work with Plus Us, due to the added value its ongoing consultancy would offer.

Working collaboratively with the healthcare workforce platform provider, Patchwork, Plus Us was able to deliver training sessions and ongoing support. This ensured the Trust was able to get the most out of the platform.



The move away from siloed spreadsheets enabled all temporary medical workforce job requirements to be accessed by the complete recruitment framework, providing the Trust with access to a wider talent pool for each job, at more competitive day rates, via direct engagement.

The ongoing consultancy of Plus Us also helped to embed new ways of working in the Trust's temporary staffing team. By leveraging sector knowledge and its understanding of Plus Us, the Trust diversified the roles it was recruiting for while still meeting its medical staffing needs.

The Results

In the first five months following go-live, the Trust has been able to:



increase direct engagement of its temporary medical workforce from **23%** to **63%**.



secure regular monthly savings of **£30k** due to medical staff being booked at lower charge rates.



save **£33k** in VAT due to an increase in direct engagement of its temporary medical workforce.



reduce the pressure on the Trust's medical staffing team through new ways of working.

“ Plus Us gave us the confidence, knowledge and processes to take back control of our temporary medical staffing supply chain. Through its consultancy and support, we’ve not only been able to secure real cost savings but as a team, we’ve also reduced our workload for day-to-day recruiting, allowing us to focus resource on longer term projects and plans.

We’ve also been able to dispel recruitment myths with our clinical colleagues over the resource and skills they need to develop a more resilient workforce model and meet the ongoing needs of the busy Trust. By working with Plus Us, we’ve surpassed what we thought was possible in temporary medical staffing and have even seen temporary staff move from non-direct engagement to direct engagement and contracted roles.

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Karl Westgarth, Head of Medical Staffing
Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust