



Customer Success Story

Improved roster compliance helps Croydon Health Services save £860K in six months

The Croydon Health Services NHS Trust is a large District General Hospital employing approximately 4,500 staff in 250 units working across both hospital and community sites.

oceansblue
intelligent workforce compliance



The challenge

Cutting costs and making the most of e-rostering

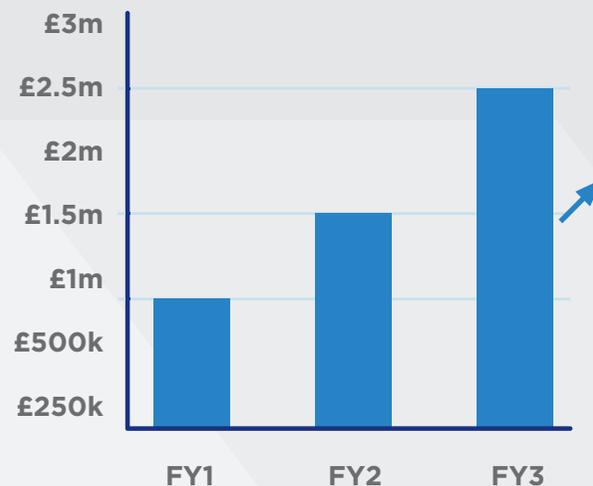


Croydon Health Services was struggling to achieve efficient rostering, balancing the need to cut costs with that of ensuring high-quality care to patients. NHSI Rostering Levels of Attainment (LoA) had remained static for several years, and temporary staffing spend was high.

As a result, the Trust was looking to kick start a transformation in its rostering practices to cut costs, increase regulatory compliance, and maximise its return on investment (ROI) in e-rostering – without reducing headcount or compromising the quality of care.

To help them identify and deliver best practices to achieve these goals, the Trust approached Oceansblue.

Savings made and predicted



Goals

- Reducing temporary staffing spend
- Increasing regulatory compliance
- Maximising ROI in e-rostering



Setting Croydon Health Service up for success

We started Croydon Health Services' transformation journey with a Discovery Audit. This is the best way to accurately assess a Trust's starting point in its transformation journey, understand what is working, and identify potential areas for improvement.

During the Discovery Audit, we configured automated data feeds from e-rostering, ESR and NHS Professionals (NHSP), joining up this information in our NHS Data Hub. We then used machine learning and data mining to highlight areas for improvement.

Interestingly, our models revealed that units with high temporary staffing and overtime usage were not rostering effectively, and that habits and culture were driving costs up unnecessarily.

To overcome these challenges, we provided the Trust with a "menu" of interventions and their cost. These were jointly agreed with the Trust, with priorities set as goals for the first year.

Driving operational change with Ward Guardian

The first step to act on our plan was to implement [Ward Guardian](#), Oceansblue's automated "Compliance as a Service" solution.

Ward Guardian is designed to disrupt poorly planned rosters and advise ward managers and matrons on areas for improvements. This information is presented in natural language and heatmaps, and nudges units to take the best course of action to reduce staff shortages, minimise agency costs, improve staff wellbeing and enhance care standards.

Ward Guardian is highly customisable and complements existing systems used by the Trust. It's also quick and non-disruptive to implement. Powered by AI and Nudge Theory, this fully automated solution ensures that every unit can benefit from having a virtual rostering assistant

on site, offering best practice advice that is in line with the Trust's policy.



Ward Guardian gives me a structure against which I can review my rosters. Everything is in one place, and the heatmaps help me spot the 'needle in the haystack' that we could spend hours trying to find.

Croydon Health Services Unit Manager





The right data, at the right time, to the right person

Implementing Ward Guardian allowed the Trust to provide the right data, at the right time, to the right person – all robotised

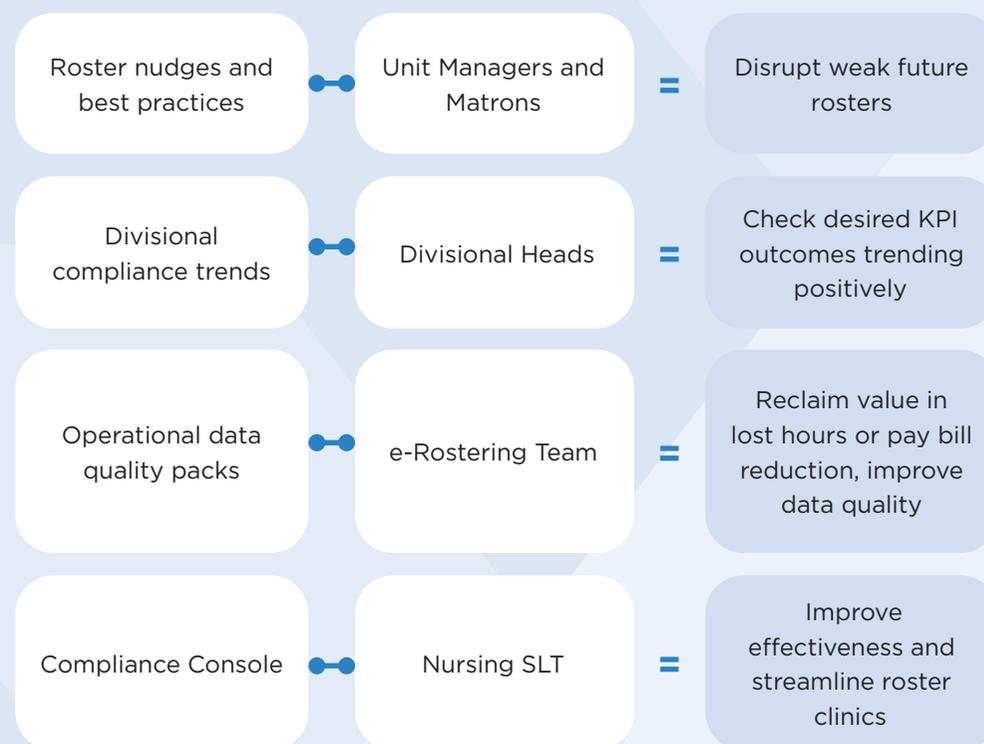
With unit-tailored guidance reaching managers and matrons, central **data quality and correction packs** were shared weekly with the e-rostering team. This proved to be an efficient way to detect duties or unavailabilities that were not entered correctly, and that could trigger unnecessary costs or impact on reporting accuracy. For example, it's hard to calculate net hours values unless data is reliable and trusted by ward managers.

Moreover, Divisional Leads received **automated KPIs reporting**, with regular compliance summaries sent directly to their email inboxes.

The Nursing SLT and e-rostering team also used the **Ward Guardian Compliance Console** to facilitate effective roster support clinics, further enhancing roster improvement.

This, in turn, led to a higher degree of support for unit managers, with the rostering team present at clinics to answer questions and ensure demand templates, bands, contract hours and postings are dynamically updated.

One crucial difference between traditional analytical tools and Ward Guardian is that the former only reviews historical data, while our platform uses machine learning to predict the future and suggest more efficient working practices.





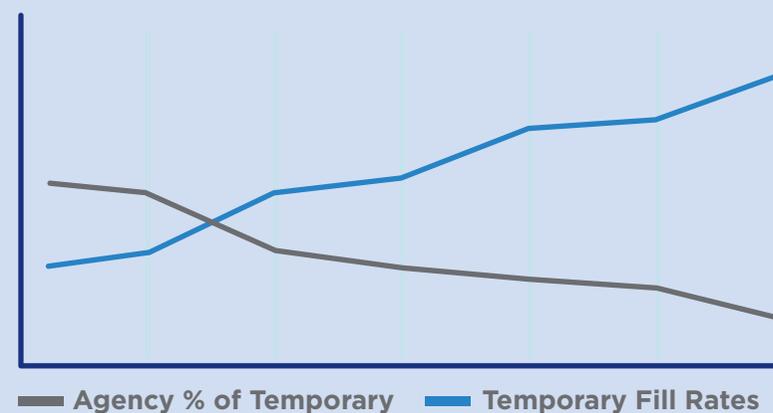
Project Results



The results of the implementation were quickly seen:

- Poor planning patterns were disrupted, with Ward Guardian driving long-term, sustainable change
- Roster planning became simpler, well-structured and automated, saving time and money
- Issues with planning and staffing were predicted with confidence, before they occurred
- The SLT engaged with an easy-to-consume 'single version of the truth' at both higher and operational levels, even when staff were not experts in e-rostering
- The Trust was provided with long-standing support to progress in the NHS's LoA compliance ladder
- Artisanal data science services were available to the Trust, on demand, to add capability and ad-hoc capacity as required

Project results



Results

- Increased fill rates
- Decreased temporary staffing costs
- Evidenced savings: **£860K** in six months
- An approved target of **£1.5M** in savings for the coming FY
- A more engaged set of unit managers and rostering team members
- A clear overview of how units plan and where support is needed



Our partnership with Oceansblue enabled us to develop a programme that rolled out Ward Guardian to increase visibility of rostering effectiveness and take appropriate actions to improve safe staffing levels.

We worked with key leaders to identify where we were losing productive hours and find ways to increase the availability of our staff. These actions have ultimately reduced lost time and decreased our reliance on temporary staff, providing more stability in the continuity of care for our patients.

The power of the data analytics and predictive modelling available via Oceansblue means we can now take evidence-based decisions that improve working patterns, retention and staff experience for everyone employed at Croyton Health Services.

This would not have been possible without considerably investing in increasing headcount, skills and capabilities within the Trust.

Oceansblue is a critical addition to my existing small in-house e-roster team. They truly believe in collaboration and have been easy to work with, taking an interest in understanding how we work and making recommendations that benefit us. Oceansblue's desire to make a difference across the NHS means we are talking about innovation and first-of-a-kind projects that are only possible thanks to the machine learning and predictive data analytics they provide.

They are the step change the NHS needs to make the improvements our people and patients deserve.



Debbie Wheddon, Deputy Director of HR and OD, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust.





Next steps for Croydon Health Services and Oceansblue:



- Using AI and predictive data modelling to create an “early warning” costing model to help managers identify financial risk
- Merging insights from roster data with PAS data to predict demand and generate automated daily ‘nursing huddle’ reports that include care hours per patient day (CHPPD) heatmaps
- Extending Ward Guardian to cover medical personnel to improve productivity and develop flexible roster templates
- Build additional AI models forecasting patient demand and finessed staffing numbers, sickness, staff retention and demand versus capacity
- Using this data to further improve the effectiveness of our roster support clinics
- Oceansblue to develop and productionise additional costed interventions to recover lost hours, increase data accuracy, and reduce the pay bill.



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