

Five strategies NHS Trusts can implement to ease the winter staffing 'crisis'

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As the annual scaremongering around the NHS winter 'crisis' begins, Remedium Partners (<https://www.remediumpartners.com/>) - a consultancy which specialises in the recruitment of permanent doctors from overseas to ease Trusts' reliance on agency locums - has urged hospitals to implement five key strategies to make sure they're fully prepared:

1. Ensure IT and Infrastructure systems are equipped for a possible deluge: making these 'winter ready' and able to withstand the uptick in demand will help reduce the challenges of an increase in patient numbers.
2. Strengthen local partnerships: success during this high-demand period will be impacted by strong, collaborative working across Trusts and local authorities. A mentality of 'we are all in this together' will certainly help reduce pressures across the board.
3. Review patient pathways ahead of the increased admissions: these are a source of constant change and identifying areas that can be streamlined in the lead up to the winter rush will help improve efficiencies and potentially free up much needed resources.
4. Ensure comprehensive on-boarding of each new hire: of course, this is a long-term focus, but for any immediately new doctors, make sure they have access to an effective induction programme to ensure they hit the ground running.
5. Look to the future: long-term goals should be focused on smarter staffing where a sufficient talent pool is developed and engaged ready to meet the 2019 demand, without a drain on budgets due to an overreliance on agency locums.

David Green, Co-Founder of Remedium, comments:

"This is always a difficult time of year for NHS leaders, hospitals and trusts. There's already been the odd whisper here and there about the winter 'crisis', but while we're still arguably in the calm before the storm, now is the time to begin putting preparations in place. While there is no quick fix to some of the challenges in the health service, there are measures that can be put in place to mitigate some of the barriers that will be faced in the coming months. The longer-term solution is in developing strategic staffing solutions that not only ensure that the required resources are already on-hand when patient numbers increase, but also that money isn't being drained from the NHS into unnecessary agency locum spend."

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