

Workforce solutions providers can solve Agency staff problems in NHS now

Submitted by: SOPR

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Sarah Heales, operations director at Talent HCM (<http://www.talenthcm.com>), which specialises in helping hospitals manage their agency staff, comments on government's plans to clamp down on NHS agency staff spend:

I hope that today's coverage about the government's new measures to clamp down on "rip-off staffing agencies" will encourage NHS Trusts to focus more how they can better manage their own agency staff.

Companies like ours are offering Trusts the tools to reduce excessive spend on temporary staff now. Hospitals using our neutral vendor solution, where we help manage the whole workforce for a hospital, will reduce their hourly rates across the board.

We sit between the Trusts or hospitals and agencies taking a 'helicopter' view of demand and predicting peaks and troughs. This means we can focus on driving down shift demand, providing an effective hospital staff bank service and reducing recruitment agency dependence and spend. It's about us working in partnership with the Trust, not just being a supplier.

We use sophisticated IT models to measure and monitor how demand arises and prevent deficiencies in planning. This information makes it possible to plan the workforce efficiently and avoid sudden gaps which mean falling back on agencies that can then take advantage by charging high fees.

I also hope the focus on rising agency spend will mean that Trusts will only use agencies that stick to approved NHS Framework rates. This would mean unscrupulous agencies could not take advantage of the NHS, as Trusts would be prevented from using them.

I think everyone accepts that agency staff will always have a role in the NHS but they should be covering busy periods or staff sickness. To some extent, temporary staff expenditure has risen after the publication of the Francis Report, which has meant hospitals have needed to put more staff on wards and there is a disconnect between the size of the existing NHS workforce and its current needs. This means getting professional help to manage staff demand is probably more critical than it has ever been.

I would encourage anyone who was interested in having a detailed understating of the options for hospitals and Trusts to look at our comprehensive guide to development of recruitment practices and latest options such as the neutral vendor solution. It can be downloaded here - <http://www.talenthcm.com/download/> (<http://www.talenthcm.com/download/>). The 30 page guide will give NHS managers the knowledge they need to cut costs, maintain staff quality and supply, whilst ensuring compliance.

One last point, regarding agency staff is that expensive is not the only issue. Our systems also make sure that all staff are compliant as they are thoroughly checked prior to going onto a ward, so patients can be sure they are being looked after by someone with the proper training and qualifications."

Ends

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Note to editors:

For more information on Talent HCM please go to <http://www.talenthcm.com/>

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Talent HCM is one of the new breed of workforce management solution businesses that focuses on providing a range of customised managed services, recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) and outsourced services to both the public and private sectors.

Workforce solutions provider, Talent HCM is a supplier of supplier of nurses and social care workers on the Agency Nurses and Social Care Workers framework agreement from Crown Commercial Service (CCS).

The Agency Nurses and Social Care Workers framework is a national framework for the provision of temporary agency nurses and social care workers to the NHS and other public sector organisations throughout the UK. The agreement supports the Government's aim to deliver significant, sustainable savings for the taxpayer by centralising; standardising and aggregating procurement spend for common goods and services.

'A guide to recruitment outsourcing in the NHS' offers a full understanding of all the recruitment options available to NHS managers, including the latest developments such as the neutral vendor solution. It can be downloaded here - <http://www.talenthcm.com/download/>