

Good Hope Hospital

Improving recruitment and retention problems through work life balance

The company

Sector Public administration, education and health
Location Birmingham

The workforce

Number of employees	2,841
Percentage women	81%
Percentage from ethnic minorities	14%
Turnover	18%

(This includes 12% voluntary leavers but excludes completed contracts such as doctors on 6 months.)
Percentage of women returning to work after maternity leave 85%

The challenge

The NHS in general, including Good Hope Hospital, was facing a recruitment and retention crisis.

The response

A system of self-rostering was introduced, whereby nurses choose the shifts they want to work rather than the traditional off-duty system of nurses writing down the shifts they cannot work. The off-duty system, apart from being extremely time consuming, was open to abuse and favouritism and was well-recognised as being a cause of friction on wards.

The computerised RosterPro system turned the whole process on its head, and removed the administrative burden from the nurse manager. Once a month nurses simply enter the shifts they want to work onto the computer. As well as identifying their availability, the nurses are able to assign a preference rating to each shift. RosterPro does the rest, with the system allocating shifts on a fair and equitable basis.

Business benefits

- Improved staff morale
- Boost in recruitment rates
- Reduction in staff turnover from 14.4% to 9.3%
- Huge administrative burden released from ward managers
- Sickness and absenteeism rates greatly reduced
- Average sickness at Good Hope reduced from 6% to 5% (against an increase on non self-rostering wards)
- Better customer care due to staff having a better work life balance
- 15% increase in staff being able to work the hours of their choosing in the space of one year
- Improvement in computer literacy amongst nursing staff

In practice

One nurse who has benefited from the introduction of self-rostering is Ward Sister and busy mum, Auveen.

Like many, Auveen juggles family life with a full-time job, but the flexibility of self-rostering allows her to manage her work-life balance so she has time for her husband and children, and her work.

Auveen works 37½ hours a week and, using RosterPro, chooses her shifts to allow her to make time for activities with her two young children. For example, on a particular day, both children have after school activities that Auveen enjoys watching so she works an early shift allowing her to finish in time to pick them up from school and take them to their respective activities.

With flexible shift working Auveen finds she can spend valuable time with the children: “Whether I’m providing an after-school taxi service or spending time doing homework with the children, I love the fact that my job now allows me this flexibility. I firmly believe that young minds need to be nourished and my working pattern allows me to spend quality time with the children that a fixed hours job just wouldn’t allow.”

Self-rostering also means that Auveen can plan for appointments such as the dentist, and if she has a course, she can request a couple of late starts to enable her to fit in study time.