

# Empowering staff to bring evidence to professional judgement and make a difference to care quality and safety

*“The challenge of engaging staff to make changes to the way we work to improve safety, quality and cost needs to be supported at every level of nursing leadership. Giving our ward managers the tools to be able to review and compare their establishments and gain an in depth understanding of their care levels and costs has empowered them to have informed discussion with their matrons and non-clinical business partners and make the case for change, demonstrating that they can make a difference to both patients and staff and really contribute to the quality of care across the Trust .”* **Cathy Hill, Assistant Director of Nursing.**

## Background

In October 2015, Chelsea and Westminster NHS FT merged with West Middlesex University Hospitals Trust. As a part of the due diligence process, it undertook a cross-site workforce review using Establishment Genie to get a clear understanding of care levels across the sites and assess how they were currently working. This lay the foundation for further 6-monthly establishment reviews using the Genie to compare, remodel and report on nurse-staffing. The data was then overlaid with staff-sensitive outcome measures to identify any areas for concern and focus interventions on those areas of most need.

## Challenge:

The Lord Wigram Ward nursing team felt care levels were low at night and they had consistent specialising requirements causing overspend on the ward budget.

## Action:

The team reviewed their current ways of working and identified gaps in terms of care levels in comparison to medical wards on both sites. The data showed that at night these were lower than the other wards. Historically this had been appropriate but over the previous 6-months the acuity and dependency of patients had increased.

## Result:

- ✓ The ‘current’ establishment was compared to a ‘proposed’ workforce model to show the impact such changes would have on care levels and costs to senior clinical and non-clinical colleagues.
- ✓ Substantively employed an additional HCA at night to improve care levels providing consistency and quality of care. This also reduced spend on specialising, and decreased the 'on the day' movement of staff.
- ✓ The impact these changes have had on the ward can be seen in the patients and their carers experience as well as in staff morale.

## Learning:

- ✓ The importance of monitoring nursing establishments to make sure they are appropriate cannot be underestimated. The impact in terms of safety, quality and cost are easily measurable, but the intangible benefits of empowering ward managers to make decisions on their staffing can be felt on every ward.
- ✓ Providing a tool to facilitate discussion on a common platform bringing safety, quality and cost together, builds relationships, breaks down barriers, increases transparency and supports building trust.

