

CASE STUDY

NHS SBS boosts manager self service at Royal Free London

With more than 10,000 employees able to access the national NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system, leaders at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (Royal Free London) recognised the potential for greater workforce efficiencies through better use of the platform – turning to NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) to help implement more functionality to improve productivity.

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From the outset we knew we had the right team in place with the right people. NHS SBS instilled confidence at every stage – despite it being a high pressure and high-stakes period.”

SHARON CHURCHLEY

Head of systems and processes (employee services)
Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

THE CHALLENGE

The Royal Free London is a large and well-known NHS hospital trust serving a population of over 1.6 million people across 20 sites in north London and Hertfordshire.

Like NHS organisations across the country, the trust recognised it was just scratching the surface of ESR's capabilities, resulting in unrealised benefits around efficiency, data security, and time and cost savings.

In an effort to eradicate outdated paper-based processes, free up invaluable employee resource, and give managers more control and accountability, the Royal Free London proposed introducing manager self service (MSS) within ESR.

This would enable managers to access live workforce reports, easily update contracts, and monitor competencies and training requirements – all in one place.

Employing over 10,000 staff and more than 600 managers, this ambitious change needed to be managed carefully to mitigate risks and have minimal impact on day-to-day operations.

The Covid-19 pandemic subsequently added additional complexities, with the project needing to be managed – and training delivered – remotely.



THE SOLUTION

The Royal Free London looked to NHS SBS for support given its unique knowledge of ESR – its experts were involved with the original national rollout of the system – and extensive experience of managing similar large-scale NHS projects successfully.

The NHS SBS team developed a detailed project plan and schematic timeline, which aligned to the Royal Free London's specific organisational requirements, such as the appraisal recording process.

The trust opted for a 'big bang' approach, with a plan to launch the new system and changes on one day, without gradual phasing or pilot periods.

The NHS SBS team, therefore, provided critical support around raising internal awareness and developing training resources, such as quick reference guides, which employees could refer to in the future.

Sharon Churchley, head of systems and processes (employee services) at the Royal Free London, said:

"NHS SBS worked really well with our team and our project manager was always calm and reassuring, taking time to listen and respond to all our queries and questions."



THE RESULT

In the face of huge pandemic challenges and the trust dealing with unprecedented pressures, the NHS SBS team kept the ESR project on track so that MSS launched successfully and on time.

The result is that MSS is now used as standard by all people managers across the trust.

Sharon added: "When we spoke to other NHS trusts that had been through this same process, they were always extremely positive about working with NHS SBS.

"This has absolutely also been the case for us at the Royal Free London. We had a great working relationship with NHS SBS throughout the project and we're looking forward to reaping the benefits for many years to come."

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SUMMARY

- Expert NHS SBS ESR team ensured manager self service (MSS) launched successfully and on time
- MSS helps to eradicate paper-based processes, frees up employee resource, and give managers more control and accountability
- MSS now used as standard by all 600 people managers across the trust

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