

Poor e-Roster Training Leads to High Stress



Ward managers are over-stressed owing to a lack of basic training in essential areas such as electronic rostering, a *Nursing Times* report says.

At the Safe Staffing Summit run by Healthcare Conferences UK, experts have warned that ward sisters are left floundering and opportunities to make the most efficient use of resources are wasted.

Head of workforce insight at the health service's staff bank NHS Professionals, Maria Nicholson, said there are cases of some trusts investing significantly in teams to introduce e-rostering but then leave, expecting the system to "run itself".

Ward managers receive minimal training on running the systems for best efficiency are then blamed when something goes wrong.

"Too often you see ward managers being held to account when they have had no training and support," she said. "They may only have been in post for a few months and it may be their first ward sister job."

Additionally, bureaucracy connected to ordering bank and agency staff leaves ward sisters feeling "disempowered".

Eve Mitchell, a management consultant who works with trusts to review nurse staffing, said the negligible support for ward sisters was "ludicrous" and that ward managers often burst into tears when discussing staffing issues with her.

"I don't think anyone should go to work on the verge of tears every day," she said. "From a patient safety point of view, it's not good because you can't make good decisions when you are so upset."

Mitchell also questioned how anyone would want to step up to a ward manager role only to get "shot down".

Nicholson and her team undertook a review that found "trusts could save between £150,000 to £1m by eliminating poor practice and implementing robust rostering policies."

The suggestion of the presence of a dedicated rostering support team for auditing practice and ongoing training and advice featured in the review.

"A trust employing 1,500 to 2,000 nursing staff would need a team of three as an absolute minimum, ideally consisting of a band 8, band 5 and a support worker, while larger organisations would need much bigger teams," she said.

Other problems in the review included:

- Rosters not being published on time;
- Vacant shifts not being sent to the bank on time;
- Unused contracted hours.

At one trust, the cost of unused contracted hours was £314,988 over 12 months.

Health Education England is working with NHS Employers on the development of training for ward sisters, charge nurses and team leaders. The four-module, e-learning package would focus on rostering, setting establishments and staffing levels and wider workforce planning and development.

Source: [Nursing Times](#)

Images Credit: Nurseuncut

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