

OPTIMISING A COLLABORATIVE WORKFORCE WITHIN A DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL AND PRIMARY CARE.

Julie Blundell, Jo Godden, Rebecca Mullen and Helen Cockerill: on behalf of the Research and Development Team. West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. Bury St Edmunds. IP33 2QZ.

Background: There is a recognised workforce shortage in Primary Care with low numbers of General Practitioners and Primary Care Nurses. This has resulted in a decline in research and participant recruitment. In an attempt to bridge this gap, a collaboration between the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and Primary Care Nurses was proposed.

“It has been good business for patient benefit”.

Objective: To establish partnership working between Primary and Secondary Care Researchers’, to the benefit of our local population. Fundamentally, this involved sharing research activities and workforce resources to maximise recruitment within the West Suffolk community.

“Positive links and relationships have been forged between Primary Care and WSFT”.

Collaboration: In early 2016, discussions regarding the possibility of a collaborative pilot began between the Primary Care Locality Manager and WSFT Research Manager.
During April to August 2017; Two Interventional Research studies were opened in 3 local GP Practices, which involved partnership working between all parties.

Challenges:

Grasping the complexities and navigating around different health systems. The support for nurses coming from an acute setting into Primary care by an experienced Primary Care Nurse is central to success.

Short recruitment window and research nurses working extra hours resulted in variable time availability, which increased pressure on recruitment and project expectations.



Achievements:

Patients’ were given the opportunity to be involved in research, which otherwise they would not have been.

Increased recruitment for Primary Care, WSFT and CRN Eastern as a whole.

Improved support and networking between research nurses and practices about the different working environments and challenges.

All parties involved believed that the model could be rolled out to other organisations.

What the Project Delivered:

- Three local Research Naïve GP Practices
- Study set-up and support from LCRN Eastern Primary Care Research Nurses
- Research activities delivered by Secondary Care Research Nurse
- A flexible, effective and VFM Workforce

72 Participants Recruited to Research



Feedback from Stakeholders

“The collaboration was thought to have been successful because of the way that the research nurse teams had communicated and supported each other”

Key enabler and moving forward

- ✚ The collaboration would not have succeeded without the engagement and mentoring of the Primary Care Research Nurses in bridging the different Primary and Secondary Care Health systems; this must be considered moving forward.
- ✚ The importance of correct alignment within the model to enable more opportunities for future flexible Research collaborations between Primary Care and Secondary Care.