

Employment passport

South London Mental Health and Community Partnership

What was the aim?

South London Partnership's (SLP) three trusts – Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust – wanted to improve career and development opportunities and working environments for clinical staff. This was a core goal of its nursing development programme. But staff moving to new permanent roles or secondments in different SLP trusts faced a long wait and delayed start – not uncommon in the NHS. They were not therefore motivated to stay within SLP trusts. Time taken to fill roles can affect care continuity and become costly, with agency cover often required. The aim was to offer staff flexibility to move easily, quickly and promote SLP trusts as attractive employers.

What was the solution?

An 'employment passport' allows staff to move across SLP trusts easily by redesigning several processes:

- pre-employment checks – confirmation they have been done by the original employing trust and are clear, with the individual approved to work; trusts retain their own approaches to managing anomalies safely
- mandatory and statutory training (MAST) – common areas do not need to be repeated providing the training is current, regardless of variations in delivery (eg online, classroom); additional courses are required only where training is out of date or specific to the new employer

- appraisals and development records – individuals are invited to share records of their performance appraisal and development review and personal development review with their new employer to continue their development path; the SLP's nursing development programme has also introduced a shared career ladder for Band 2 to 6 nurses across the trusts.

Staff must agree on a simple consent form to use of the passport and sharing information.

What were the challenges?

Ensuring safety through the recruitment process was essential. Each trust remains responsible for providing a safe workforce, and the passport does not override this. It provides an alternative streamlined process for most transfers between SLP trusts.

There are variations in MAST, including course list, delivery and content. For example, only one SLP trust has a mandatory smoking cessation course. Harmonising each course proved unmanageable, so a more pragmatic approach was taken, which also respects each trust's position on MAST. This will be ongoing work.

What were the results?

Staff can now move across trusts into new jobs or secondments up to 75% more quickly. The passport is a recent development, and further system/process change is needed to support implementation. Initial evidence suggests it is effective for staff to move quickly between trusts. Although the passport was aimed initially at nurses, other clinical and non-clinical groups have benefited too.

What were the learning points?

Finding a straightforward solution that all trusts agree and adopt was a challenge, as is aligning current systems and policies to meet new processes.

Senior management's support and a culture that is positive about change were vital. Ongoing work helps ensure managers understand that the passport does not devalue previous checks.

Next steps

SLP will continually review and refine the passport as practical issues arise.

Want to know more?

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