

DORSET HEALTHCARE UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

PROMOTING STAFF BENEFITS THROUGH EVENTS

The organisation

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHC) operates integrated community health, mental health and prison healthcare, serving a population of 700,000 in the south west of England. The trust has over 5,000 staff working across 300 sites.

Background

DHC wanted to understand which rewards staff wanted and valued, however, staff survey results identified that employee knowledge of rewards could be improved.

Karen Beckett, head of payroll and benefits at DHC shares how her team ran a number of roadshows in September 2015, to raise awareness of the benefits available to staff, and to ascertain how communications can be maintained to ensure staff know about the benefits they're eligible for.

The roadshows

A planning group was developed, including managers from reward, payroll and pensions. The group agreed which sites to visit, developed a communications plan and agreed how to evaluate the roadshows.

The objectives for the roadshows were clear:

- Raise awareness of DHC's rewards and benefits.
- Gain understanding of what rewards staff want and value.
- Gather feedback on planned initiatives, such as online pay slips and buying and selling annual leave.
- Help staff understand the role of the payroll and pensions team and how they fit into the wider organisation.

The roadshows were held at five separate sites over one week, including trust headquarters and four of the larger sites - hospitals at Westhaven, Alderney, Shaftesbury and Wimborne. Each roadshow took the form of an exhibition, with stands manned by members of the payroll, reward, expenses and pensions teams that staff could visit to find out more information and ask questions. Stands included:

- **Staff benefits** – information on benefits and rewards, so staff could better understand what they can access and how. Leaflets and information on rewards and benefits were available for staff to take away with them.

- **Pensions** – staff could find out about the NHS Pension Scheme and ask questions about the retirement options available to them.
- **Providers of salary sacrifice schemes** – home technology equipment was on show for staff to view and they could find out how to sign up to the trust's various salary sacrifice schemes.
- **Payroll** – staff could ask questions, find out more about the payroll team and discuss the benefits of moving to online pay slips.
- **Expenses** – providing an opportunity for staff to view and experience the new online expenses system, and where necessary, be set up on the system.

The payroll stand had its own '10 facts' leaflets on tax and national insurance, designed to get staff thinking about what might be relevant to them. This helped generate conversation and questions and included topics such as the rewards and benefits staff can access, information on taxation and pension saving allowance limits, information on payroll services, and 'did you know' questions about expenses.

Evaluation and outcomes

Feedback was generally positive and showed that staff valued having the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the rewards and benefits the trust offers. As a result, the trust have used this format for trust bank conferences and included other elements, such as round table discussions with staff. One in particular, about how to increase the number of staff in the trust bank and reduce agency spend, helped the trust to successfully reduce their agency spend by at least 50 per cent.

As a result of the popularity of the pension stand, the trust ran a series of pension 'surgeries', giving information on retirement planning, including the flexibilities available within the NHS Pension Scheme. The surgeries are popular and are often oversubscribed. The trust will be running these again in 2016 and 2017.

The trust gathered staff feedback on moving to a system of online pay slips. A total of 75 per cent of respondents agreed that this would be a good idea. The trust are now taking this forward. Feedback also showed that staff would value the opportunity to buy and sell annual leave as an additional staff benefit and as a result, the trust implemented this from April 2016.

Challenges

Communicating with all staff to promote the roadshows was challenging, as it was recognised that not everyone had regular access to a computer at work. The trust used a number of different communication channels to promote the roadshows including weekly newsletters, line manager briefings, daily staff emails and the trust intranet site.

With 300 sites across a large area, enabling as many staff as possible to visit the roadshows was also a challenge. To combat this, the planning team chose locations with the largest numbers of staff and covered all geographical areas of the county.

Next steps

DHC plan to run the roadshows again during National Payroll Week 5-9 September 2016. This time, they will visit more sites and use the roadshows to help address some of their workforce priorities. Stands for 2016 will include:

- **Trust bank** – a major workforce priority for the trust is to continue to reduce agency spend. It hopes to encourage staff to join the trust bank, thereby helping to reduce their agency spend.
- **e-Roster** – enabling staff to experience the new centralised roster system and ask questions.
- **Total reward statements (TRS)** – the trust will use the 2016 roadshow to promote TRS and encourage staff to access their statements.
- **Career and financial planning** – an interactive activity to get staff thinking about what they value most and what the trust can offer, such as training, career development or salary sacrifice initiatives.

Top tips for other trusts

- ✓ *Planning is essential to ensure a wide variety of content to engage staff*
- ✓ *Theme stands to highlight what you are doing to address key workforce issues.*
- ✓ *Identify objectives and develop an evaluation plan to measure success.*

Further information

For more details, please contact Karen Beckett, Head of Payroll and Benefits on 01305 361126 / 01202 277322 or karen.beckett@dhuft.nhs.uk.

Find out more about total reward in the NHS including Total Reward Statements and how to join our Total Reward Engagement Network through our [reward web pages](#).

You can contact the reward team on 0113 306 3000 or by emailing us at reward@nhsemployers.org.