PwC with Newham University Hospitals NHS Trust

Summary

As with almost all UK public sector organisations, NHS trusts are under increasing pressure to do more with much less, and Newham University Hospital Trust is no exception. At the start of 2010, London’s Strategy Health Authority informed Trust executives that they had to cut their £160m annual operating budget by £20m a year.

PwC’s job was to take a look at the Trust’s wage bill, and we set about designing and delivering a cost-reduction programme that would spark a revolution across the NHS.

Our approach took a ‘big picture’ look at a patient’s journey through the Trust’s hospitals. The result was our Patient Pathway service model – a fundamental yet sustainable redesign of the way the Trust delivered administrative and clerical services.

At the centre of this redesign was a brand new role – that of the patient pathway coordinator. These employees would take on the task of supporting patients throughout their entire journey through the hospital. No more unnecessary paperwork, as patients moved from one stage of care to the next. No more passing off to other teams. Instead, we proposed an organisational design that would have patients watched over by one person from the moment they entered a trust hospital to the day they checked out.

To bring this core concept to life across the trust, we created a small project management office to centrally coordinate and shape our design into sound financial and operational plans. Then, with one eye on sustainability, we began training 30 trust employees to run the office and lead the service redesign work.

Each member of PwC’s 20-stong team was totally committed to the transformation. Many of our team members had worked with the Trust before – so brought strong sector knowledge and high-level relationships to the programme.

Our team also had a great track record of delivering health-related cost-reduction programmes– giving them deep operational insight into our client’s problem.

The result? The redesign and subsequent transformation achieved a £1m per month reduction in the Trust’s administrative and clerical workforce costs.

What’s more, the reduction in headcount came at no cost to the quality of service delivered by the Trust and in fact the transformation led to significantly improved patient satisfaction scores. Our approach is currently being used by the NHS as a case study for efficiency-related best practice across more than 400 NHS organisations – and has already been rolled out to 15 of our other NHS clients.