



Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust's HR Resources Manager Tracy Priestman explains the induction and implementation process of recruiting overseas staff to the health service.

Staff shortages have been causing concern across the NHS and it has prompted Trusts to look outside of the UK to recruit medical professionals.

The issue has been prevalent in nursing but has also expanded into surgeries and accident and emergency (A&E) departments. Trusts and other NHS organisations are now increasingly looking overseas to recruit their staff members and Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust, based in Fenland, is one of those affected.

Ms Priestman has seen a notable decline in the number of nurses coming out of the UK from both colleges and universities and it is causing a decline in health staff in the Trust's hospitals. This lack of home-grown professionals has meant Trusts like Hinchingbrooke are enlisting the help of The Placement Group to source nurses from overseas.

Hinchingbrooke chose Spain as its next focus of recruitment.

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Rigorous induction

Hinchingbrooke was looking to recruit 30 Band 5 medical nurses in two different cohorts.

A series of recruitment days in Spain were arranged by The Placement Group, who took responsibility for pre-screening all candidates to ensure they had the right level of knowledge, clinical experience, literacy and numeracy. This enabled the Trust to prepare for the interviewing processes.

Candidates were spread throughout the country and either conducted face-to-face interviews or web based interviews via Skype. The process included drugs calculation tests and scenario along with a clinical scenario.

Ms Priestman explained that not all candidates attending the event were selected to work within the Trust and that one of the factors was the level of English among the candidates. She felt that some of them may not be able to properly communicate with patients at the Fenland-based Trust.

“We have a dialect here [Hinchingbrooke] and people need to really take that into consideration that there is different medical terminology for all of those things. You do need people that are able to speak and understand both conversational and medical terminology,” Ms Priestman added.

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Integration is key

Integration of staff is a key part of the recruitment process and Hinchingsbrooke employed a rigorous four-week induction programme for the 28 nurses that were selected following the interviews.

Ms Priestman explains that all members of staff are given a series of classroom-based lessons to give them a full understanding of the hospital, how it runs and the equipment it uses. Under the supervision of a mentor they learn everything there is to know about the Trust before they are allowed on to the wards.

Integrating staff also means ensuring they are happy with their surroundings and Hinchingsbrooke provided information on what to do around Fenland which is something that struck a chord with the nurses.

Ms Priestman added: "We had a roadshow where local businesses came in who provided them with the various discounts NHS staff get. A lot of the nurses are saying that they really like the slower pace of activities."

The Placement Group key for success

The work carried out by The Placement Group was cited as being one of the key factors behind the success of the recruitment process.

After initially being impressed with the presentation and demonstration offered by the company, Ms Priestman also praised the organisation during the interviewing process.

"We obviously had to do all the work in regards to paperwork we needed to take over there, like our interview questions but The Placement Group had everything there and ready. They had schedules of the candidates coming in, they were shadowing people around so I feel it worked really well," Ms Priestman said.

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