

REASON WHY?

Having the right nurse staffing levels is fundamental to providing safe and high-quality patient care, as well as creating a positive work practice environment for staff. Demonstrating safe staffing is one of the essential standards that all healthcare providers and Executive Trust Boards must comply with to meet Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulation, Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) recommendations and national policy on safe staffing.

PLAN

Safecare was initially introduced in the Trust in 2018. Despite its initial launch, it use had never become embedded in daily staffing processes and the benefits of the system had not been realised in daily work.

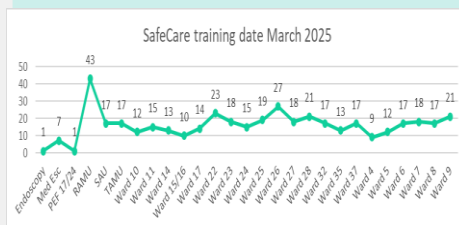
A sustainable approach to the delivery of safecare was never planned for and as such there has been no training for staff since its introduction 2018 which will impact the reliability of its use.

As part of this project, a structure to ensure that all team members requiring training was developed. This focussed on acuity scoring/ red flag analysis/ professional judgement and redeployment.

DO

Staff training was available for all staff Band 5 and above as these staff groups were identified as key stakeholders. Ward manager and Matron are responsible to make sure that the staff are confident and competent in acuity scoring to get the Staff training accurate.

Between March 2024 and March 2025 432 staff were trained for the SafeCare and 17 required reassessment.



S M A R T AIM

To support decision making on redeployment of staff and need for additional staffing for the safe care of patients by 31st March 2025, as measured by a reduction in agency usage and increase in use of substantive staffing.

STUDY

The use of Agency staff to fill staffing gaps has continued to decline. Hours used has reduced from 2005 in March 2024 to 392 in March 2025. A decrease of over 80%. Weekly agency overspend has reduced from an average of £106,000 to £13,000 (a reduction of £93,000 per week). There is an added benefit of utilising our own colleagues to provide care for our patients. The red flag is being used to raise staffing issues, enabling effective staffing management and redeployment. 64 red flags were raised in March 2025, with the most common issue being a shortfall in Registered Nurse (RN) time (33 instances). Six flags were raised in error and excluded from the count. Out of the 64 red flags, 34 were resolved, 22 reviewed, and 8 remained open. Continuous reminders and reports are sent to ensure timely action. Resolution: Out of the 64 red flags, 34 were resolved, 22 reviewed, and 8 remained open. Continuous reminders and reports are sent to ensure timely action.



ACT

The use of Safecare will be adopted. Additional consideration will need to be given to the below themes and issues:

Matrons: Ensure completion of acuity and validate weekly.

Training: All Band 5s and 6s should be confident in using SafeCare.

Red Flags: Improve communication and accuracy in raising and resolving red flags.