



CASE STUDY: OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME



BACKGROUND

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust holds a prestigious reputation for excellence and patient care. As such, there were many systems in place to monitor the performance of the outpatient service. However, initial analysis highlighted that many of these controls went unused due to the complexity and overwhelming amount of available information.

The study also highlighted opportunities in terms of productivity, in that clinic slot utilisation was far from

maximised. In addition, there were many instances where the planned clinic templates were found to vary wildly from the scheduling of the clinicians themselves, resulting in lost capacity across the board.

This situation was exacerbated by serious constraints in physical room capacity, limiting the number of clinics that could be held at any one time.

PROJECT

Meridian undertook an extensive engagement process whereby all specialties within the Trust (45) were taken through a process of identifying potential improvements in their own area.

These improvements spanned a wide variety of areas such as increasing of consulting capacity, changes to clinic appointment structures, amendment of patient appointment slot durations, use of junior clinical resource, booking processes and appointment letter content.

The sessions were opened up to both operational managers and clinicians to ensure a consistent and agreed goal was achieved in terms of specialty progression.

Given the scale of the exercise, the process represented a significant cultural shift in the way the outpatient department functioned.

Throughout this process, Meridian hosted all of the sessions and acted as a facilitator in discussions, dealing sometimes with people unwilling or reluctant to change their practice. However, in all circumstances the specialty was able to put together a proposal leading to improvement in one of two main areas – improved revenue for the Trust or rationalisation of clinic room usage.

To maintain a robust measurement throughout the process, a series of simple reports were developed by Meridian and incorporated into the Trust's infrastructure by their IT department. These reports allowed clear, at-a-glance, assessment of the appropriateness of clinic templates. These reports also provided a mechanism to track improvement during the course of the programme itself.

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RESULTS

A successful organisational development exercise which aligned the views of both operational management and the clinical teams.

Increase of 10% attendances in outpatient clinics against the same period the previous year. With an annual revenue of £35 million, this represented an annual improvement of £3.5 million.

Liberation of approximately 41 clinic room sessions per week, allowing specialties with unmet demand to be accommodated with increased capacity.

Reallocation of all clinics from the 'Meerkat' ward resulting in the ability to facilitate its redundancy and closure.



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