



## CASE STUDY: NHS STERILE SERVICES DEPARTMENT



### OUTLINE

Sterile Services were based on two sites:-

**Site 1:** A modern state of the art facility which is fully compliant with European directives regarding sterilisation of Surgical Instruments.

**Site 2:** An older facility which does not comply with European directives and would require expensive upgrading.

The brief was to examine the feasibility of improving productivity & utilisation at Site 1; & develop a feasibility study for the consolidation of all Sterile Services at site 1.

### STUDY FINDINGS

Following a three week study, working with the local management team Meridian identified a number of areas which if addressed would substantially improve Capacity & Resource Requirement Planning & Scheduling, the potential to develop economy of scale in the Management Structure.

Significant Productivity & Utilisation improvements were also identified. The Productivity gains would require considerable re-alignment of shift patterns and rosters.

### KEY FINDINGS OF STUDY

The study was carried out using a “Rough Cut” Capacity Planning Methodology. Resource Requirements were calculated and Hours were rostered as required by incoming workloads & SLA turnaround targets. Comparison of Hours actually worked versus hours required to handle the incoming workload within the SLA targets demonstrated that the Day Shift was over crewed and started too early in the morning. Shift start 8:00 ; first delivery of instruments from theatres 10:30. This underutilised time at the start of the day generated excessive overtime at the end of the day to meet the

Service Target which was expressed as “Use it today, It will be back in your Sterile Store by 8:00 tomorrow”. Utilisation Studies on the Washers & Sterilisers demonstrated that there was Washer Capacity to handle about 65% of the site 2 requirements & Steriliser Capacity to handle 100%.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ELEMENTS

1. Develop detailed Capacity & Resource Requirement Plans for the current situation and for the future, consolidated situation.
2. Develop crewing guides & rosters to minimise overtime This was a very contentious issue which was resisted very forcefully by the staff. The changes in core shift times from 8:00 - 4:00 to 10:00 - 6:00

# NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE STERILE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

3. Identify the economies of scale in management & equipment which would be realisable as part of the consolidation.

4. Develop a simple Management Information System based on monitoring Inputs & Outputs & correct rostering of staff & monitoring overtime.

5. Performance Management System with productivity calculated based on Hours Earned vs Hours Worked.

6. Provide Sterile Services with the information required to augment the Washer Capacity to enable preparation of the Business Case for consolidating Dewsbury Sterile Services into Wakefield.

## PROJECT RESULTS

1. The Capacity Plans (Daily Plan for the Week and Hourly plan for the Day) Identified significant savings which could be realised by realigning shift patterns & rosters to have the right people in the right place at the right time.

2. The Equipment Capacity Studies confirmed that consolidation of site 2 into site 1 could be achieved at a modest cost compared with upgrading the site 2 facility to comply with European Directives.

3. The client decided to increase the Capacity by more than the minimum requirement in order to compete for Private Sector & G.P. Surgery Sterilisation requirements.

4. Agenda for Change negotiations were ongoing between Management & Staff. The revised shift patterns required to realise the productivity & overtime

savings formed part of these negotiations.

5. The Client accepted that realisation of the identified result would only happen as the consolidation plan & the Agenda for Change negotiations were complete.

6. A nett reduction of 9 WTE's was identified from a payroll of 54. This includes converting the cash value of overtime & on-call saving to WTE's and the reduction in Management & Supervisory requirements in the combined unit. Additional logistics costs are reflected in the nett savings

7. The Project Schedule for the Washer Upgrades & the Consolidation was developed with the Sterile Service Manager.



Address: Meridian Productivity Ltd,  
36 Atholl Crescent Lane, Edinburgh,  
Midlothian, EH3 8ET.

E mail: [info@meridianpl.co.uk](mailto:info@meridianpl.co.uk)  
Telephone: 0131 625 8500  
Fax: 0131 625 8505

