

CASE STUDY

Surgical Outpatient Clinics Improvement Programme

Background

The Trust operates a 350+ bed hospital serving over a quarter of a million people in the South West Yorkshire area. In the last year, the Trust delivered outpatient services to over 268,000 people. Meridian initially delivered successful projects within the Medical Outpatients business unit, and due to the success of these projects, was invited to work with the Surgical specialities in relation to Outpatient Clinics.

Study Findings

Meridian undertook observations and data analysis in the Development phase of the programme in all Surgical Outpatients clinics in scope; Breast, ENT, Ophthalmology, OMFS, General Surgery, T&O & Urology. From a data perspective, it was identified that there were significant misalignments between the consultant job plans, and the clinic templates. This highlighted the opportunity to increase patient throughput without increasing expenditure. The observational studies showed that whilst the majority of the specialties had the capacity to extend their clinic templates by increasing the number of patients seen within a safe amount of time, other specialities evidenced the opportunity to realign clinic slots in line with time used by the consultants, thus reducing slot lengths per patient.

The project sold was a 32-week Improvement Programme.

The overall goals of the project were as follows.

- Increase patient attendees per clinic
- Ensure compliance to the job plans in terms of duration and attainment
- Reduce underutilised clinics or where low demand was identified.
- Overall management control systems of deliverance of paid for capacity for each speciality.

Project

Meridian worked with the CBU2 Medical Outpatient management team through a series of 1:1s, meetings and training workshops. During the sessions, a new management control system was designed and tailored to each speciality so that all Surgical Outpatient consultant-led clinics in scope were running efficiently and effectively.

One of the main focal points was to ensure transparency over delivery of paid and planned capacity through the implementation of management controls. In effect, there was an identifiable plan in place so that variances were investigated, actioned and mitigated from future occurrence. Furthermore, the redesigning of clinic templates would ensure an increase in productivity from clinic utilisation, optimisation from paid time and therefore an increase in income.

From a booking perspective, Meridian worked with the trust to create a booking forecast tool, which allowed the booking clerks and management team to clearly and easily identify any unfilled slots within the next 6 weeks. Priority was given to the next 7 days, with booking clerks being instructed to focus on filling any unfilled slots before booking 6 weeks out as normal.

A Management report was developed and installed, which provided a weekly overview of performance by speciality. This provided greater insight into key KPIs such as clinic attainment, attendance utilisation and DNA rates. Having this information on a weekly basis allowed management to make decisions and take action in a much timelier manner.

When reviewing the job plans, it also became apparent that there would be the opportunity to reduce spend by adjusting the paid hours in line with the demands of the service, and flexing between OPD & Theatre PAs to meet the needs of the service. This was developed with



the service managers and gave them the insight they needed to manage and control this aspect of the service.

Results

The implementation of new processes gave CBU2 management greater control over their service; ultimately allowing visibility on a day-to-day basis on their teams and individual performance. The installation of a daily, weekly, and monthly performance review has been embedded to allow a review of planned v. actual to identify and mitigate future variances.

The implementation of the "Unfilled slot report" led to a reduction in un-booked slots of 26% from the point of installation.

The main results of the programme are:

- An increase of New and Follow-up patient attendees per clinic in Consultant-led Surgical Outpatient activity.
- Cashed annualised savings of £311k, and a further identified annualised saving of £454k.
- Annualised Return on Investment of 3:1
- A reduction in un-booked slots of 26% from the point of installation
- Increased oversight of all service KPI's and improved ability to take action to resolve identified issues within the OPD service
- A clear annualised plan in terms of capacity, and the ability to adjust the plan where demand fluctuates. This also allows for a flexible schedule with variable indicators built into the plan.
- A self-perpetuating management control system which uses actual outputs to inform the future plan.

Contact Us

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Meridian Productivity was established 1996, and has been extensively involved in the Healthcare industry across the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Holland, Belgium, Spain and the Czech Republic. Meridian assists clients across the Healthcare environment (private and public) in achieving improved operating efficiencies and performance, through the development of bespoke management and behavioural processes. These processes are all designed and implemented to ensure that our client organisation can be assured of returning the best performance on the resources applied.

We work with about 20 to 25 organisations a year, both in the public and private sectors, helping them to reduce their operating costs, improve their productivity and provide value for money.

Find out how Meridian can benefit your organisation.

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