



NHS endoscopy team increases productivity while eliminating outsourcing and reducing risk

BUSINESS OUTCOMES

- 44% productivity increase
 - 3% increase in annual output
 - 94.5% plant utilisation compared to 82.7% previously
 - Six-figure cost-savings for the NHS by eliminating outsourcing
 - Improved staff engagement and morale
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MINDSET PROGRAMME

- A two-day senior management development session on changing mindsets and implementing a learning culture
 - Growth mindset tools and techniques to equip and enable participants to drive change
 - Marginal gains methodology for developing, prioritising, implementing and monitoring a roadmap of improvements
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Dr Darren Craig

Consultant Gastroenterologist & Clinical Director, Endoscopy

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPECIALIST ENDOSCOPY SERVICES

Part of the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Endoscopy Centre in The James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough offers the full spectrum of both diagnostic and therapeutic procedures from a purpose-built facility housing the gastroenterology department and its team of clinical specialists.

OBJECTIVE

National demand for endoscopies has doubled in the five years up to 2018. To cope with increasing demand, the department was operating under pressure seven days a week, affecting staff quality-of-life and morale. It was also obliged to outsource routine procedures to private providers at weekends, which not only increased costs but also introduced greater clinical risk by the break in continuity of care. The department wanted to optimise utilisation of its facilities and resources to increase capacity, improve patient care and reduce pressure on staff.

SOLUTION

As part of the NHS North East Leadership Academy (NELA), Dr Darren Craig, Clinical Director of Endoscopy for South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, took part in a Growth Mindset programme led by Matthew Syed Consulting. The programme provided proven techniques and practical tools to help change fixed mindsets, create a learning culture and drive continuous improvement. Using the toolkit provided by Matthew Syed Consulting, Darren worked with his team to drive a change in mindsets and to develop, prioritise, implement and monitor a roadmap of improvements based on staff feedback and suggestions.

OUTCOMES

Changes implemented over just 18 months have delivered impressive outcomes, including:

- 44% increase in productivity as a result of improved organisation, communication and efficiency
- 3% increase in overall output; the volume of procedures performed has risen from 15,900 to 16,400 per annum while reducing to a five-day working week from a seven-day week
- 94.5% plant utilisation, compared to 82.7% previously, optimising facilities and resources

The improvements mean that staff no longer have to routinely work beyond the end of their shift. Together with the elimination of weekend outsourcing, this is improving quality of life and helping to boost staff morale. Eliminating outsourcing has saved the NHS a six-figure sum of money whilst reducing risk and improving quality of care for patients.



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MANAGING VOLUMES AND VARIABILITY

Across the UK, demand for endoscopies is increasing year-on-year and has doubled over a period of five years. As well as high volumes, NHS teams must cope with significant variance in complexity, ranging from routine procedures to complex operations by highly-skilled specialists. Dr Darren Craig, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Clinical Director at South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, explains, “To cope with demand, staff were working at weekends as well as doing early morning and late evening shifts. We also had to outsource a lot of routine procedures to private providers, which meant lack of continuity for patients and increased risk and costs for the NHS.” This arrangement also meant that Darren and his team were dealing with the more complex and higher risk patients, which require more time and further increased pressure on resources and affected staff morale. As Clinical Director, Darren wanted to improve staff working conditions and morale yet increase capacity to reduce outsourcing and improve the patient experience.

ENGAGING STAFF AND DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS

Darren discovered a way forward when he took part in a growth mindset programme for the NHS North East Leadership Academy, led by Matthew Syed Consulting. “As a manager, understanding the psychology behind fixed and growth mindset and how to create a culture for high performance was immensely valuable,” he comments. “The techniques that we learnt and practised and the toolkit provided also gave me a structure that I could immediately start using with my team to change mindsets and drive continuous improvement.”

Using techniques and templates from the workshop, Darren and his team generated and prioritised a plethora of suggested improvements across staff practices, working conditions, processes and technology, patient experience, risk, safety and compliance.

“We now have a clear roadmap of improvements from our staff they believe will make a difference, and already are,” comments Darren.

For example, several core communication and administrative processes have also been reviewed and standardised, which has improved collaboration, handover and the patient experience.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING COSTS

By changing mindsets and applying a proven and best-practice approach to marginal gains, South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust’s endoscopy department has dramatically improved efficiency over just 18 months with remarkable results:

44% increase in productivity – improvements due to standardisation and better communication and processes are also boosting efficiency and enabling staff to complete more procedures over a shorter period.

3% increase in output – the volume of procedures performed has increased with the team now providing these cases within a five-day week compared with a seven-day week.

94.5% plant use, compared to 82.7% previously – the department’s facilities and resources are being used at maximum efficiency, avoiding wastage, optimising limited budgets and enabling a higher volume of procedures. “Plant productivity is at record levels as we are doing more endoscopies than ever while not requiring outsourcing at weekends” confirms Darren.



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Increased efficiency and productivity have enabled the department to eliminate outsourcing, reducing both risk and external expenditure for the NHS while improving the patient experience through continuity of care.

IMPROVING STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND MORALE

Better working practices and quality of life are also improving staff morale. “The reaction from staff has been overwhelmingly positive – they can see and feel the difference and are now asking when our next marginal gains meeting is taking place,” confirms Darren.

Problems are also now being raised more constructively, with the focus on continuous feedback and improvement. For example, daily staff ‘huddles’ have been introduced, where issues are flagged as ‘green’ if going well, ‘red’ for less well and ‘black’ where management need to address them. “Our new approach is breaking down barriers, opening up dialogue, and eliminating the build-up of problems,” comments Darren.

Darren and his team are continuing to apply marginal gains, aiming to completely eliminate outsourcing of endoscopy to the private sector and further improve efficiency and value for money across its operations.

“Adopting marginal gains is not only having a dramatic impact on efficiency, budgets and on patients, it is also creating a more collaborative culture and improving staff morale,” concludes Darren.