

Case Study...

Digital Staff Passport supports new critical care transfer service



University Hospitals of Leicester
NHS Trust

ACCOTS

Adult Critical Care Co-ordination & Transfer Service

Reliant on effective temporary movement of a highly specialised workforce across NHS organisations, the new Adult Critical Care Co-Ordination Transfer Service (ACCOTS) in the East Midlands, took a proactive 'digital first' approach to workforce processes, ensuring quick and efficient release of their team.

Background

All hospitals within the East Midlands region are part of critical care network of intensive care units, working together to ensure safe care is provided for all patients. If an intensive care patient needs to be moved between hospitals in the East Midland region and beyond, the ACCOTS team offers coordination, triage, decision-support and physical transfer under specialist clinical care.

The ACCOTS team, which is hosted by University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL), work regionally, but required to cross regional boundaries in response to demand surges service. Built-in flexibility and responsiveness of the team members is an essential part of providing an effective service.

Preparation

In January 2022, Dr Susan Dashey, ACCOTS Clinical Lead and Consultant in Anaesthesia, Intensive Care Medicine and ECMO at UHL, identified the need to quickly and easily approve the temporary movement of specialised intensive care staff required to deliver the service.

The staff were traditionally issued with honorary contracts to enable the team to temporarily work at another site, but the paper-based administrative process did not allow for rapid, unscheduled movement.

The interim COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport had previously been used by Nottinghamshire University Hospitals NHS Trust, to prepare an on-call burns team for emergency deployment at the [G7 Summit](#). Dr Dashey was informed of its potential for ACCOTS and the decision was made to use the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport.

UHL was [already registered](#) with the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport, as were three of the four Employer organisations in the immediate use case within the network, so the organisations were in a good position to use the passport for this purpose.

The COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport team supported University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW) to register, including an Information Governance Pack review and portal training for the workforce team.



COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport

Helen Atwell, Resourcing Lead at UHCW, testified to the benefits, ***“Once registered with the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport, the issuing of the passport was seamless and incredibly efficient. We were able to conduct the meeting to create the employee’s credential and verify the documentation virtually, which was hugely beneficial for our busy clinicians. It was great not to have to go through reams of paperwork and checks”.***

Which staff groups are involved?

Specialist ambulances are staffed by specialised and experienced doctors and nurses from the ACCOTS network, equipped and trained to transfer patients. The team provide the same monitoring and support patients normally receive in an intensive care unit, using a specific set of clinical skills. Each operational shift comprises of:

- Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine or Anaesthesia
- Transfer Practitioner (Intensive Care Nurse or Operating Department Practitioner)

With such a highly specialised set of skills required, the need to identify the correct staff and release them for ACCOTS work is essential.

How did it work?

Dr Dashey identified the staff members, with the four employer NHS trusts responsible for issuing passports to the team. UHL was the host, who verified the individual passports in readiness to receive staff on-site.

The appointments to issue and verify the passports were held virtually, each taking a few minutes - a vast improvement over the two week average for undertaking employment checks and issuing an honorary contract.

With a scheduled temporary move, the staff member’s passport can be issued and verified at the point of need, enabling the ACCOTS network to respond to urgent clinical demand.

Benefits to you and your organisation

The benefits to the ACCOTS network and East Midlands workforce teams were clearly evident during the pilot:

- Quick, simple and seamless movement of staff
- Removes the need for honorary contracts
- Removes duplication of employment checks
- Improved collaboration across teams/sites
- Increased knowledge sharing
- Opportunity to learn new skills and pathways
- Highlight and improve service delivery
- Efficient and flexible staff movement, i.e. urgent response to clinical demand



COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport

Prior to using the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport, deploying staff was time consuming and administratively heavy, involving extensive employment checks and issuing honorary contracts or letters of authority. **Implementing the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport reduced the overall process from 1-3 weeks to 1-2 days.**

Jane Langley, ACCOTS Practitioner, attested to the time saving, ***"The whole process took a matter of minutes in a short virtual meeting with the Workforce teams at ULH and UHL. I must thank Dr Dashey and the Workforce teams for their hard work ensuring the whole process was smooth and unproblematic"***.

Next steps

The ACCOTS network has implemented the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport as business as usual and continues to provide passports for their new members of staff, to ensure each operational team can be deployed at short notice to work at another NHS organisation.

Dr Dashey was transparent about the decision to move from the traditional honorary contract process to the cutting-edge digital COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport. ***"Having had initial worries about making the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport 'work' it seems we are making good progress and an improvement (has been made) on lead time for honorary contracts"***.

Looking long term, the ACCOTS network is committed to sharing learning and operational experience with other services and regions through the delivery of transfer training to all staff undertaking critical care transfers between hospitals. The COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport can support this educational work by equipping substantive staff at [registered NHS organisations](#) with a passport, enabling them to complete temporary moves between NHS organisations with ease, as shown in the [GM Cancer case study](#).

NUH and SFHT are long time users of the COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport, with several use cases underway. These orgs and ULH are actively involved in the development of the next version of the product – the [NHS Digital Staff Passport](#), as pilot organisations to test the rotation of postgraduate doctors and other temporary staff moves.

Further information

To find out more about the COVID-19 NHS Digital Staff Passport and how it can benefit your organisation, visit [COVID-19 Digital Staff Passport support website](#) or visit our [dedicated FutureNHS site](#).

Interested in the evolution of digital staff passporting in the NHS? Visit our [NHS Digital Staff Passport page](#) to learn more.

