

# Partnering with Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber to create the first mental health collaborative bank in the Yorkshire and Humber region



An interview with:

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## Introduction

One of the key focuses on the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is working more collaboratively across the NHS, with collaborative banks playing a key role in this. These banks allow greater mobility of staff across boundaries and sectors and should act as the primary way for staff to offer their services back to the NHS, rather than through agencies.

With this in mind, three trusts: Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, have collaboratively launched the West Yorkshire Staff Bank, the first solely mental health collaborative bank in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The three trusts partnered with Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber to ensure a smooth implementation and roll out of the new collaborative bank.

**Natalie Wong - Project Lead, Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber, provided her reflections on the project and how she thinks collaborative banks are a step towards supporting national priorities.**

## What role did Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber have in launching the West Yorkshire Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Staff Bank?

Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber work in partnership with the health and care system, aiding and supporting the introduction and implementation of innovative solutions into the NHS and beyond.

Our role within this project was to bring together and empower a group of temporary staffing and system

experts across three trusts, to work across different elements of the initiative, supporting the successful launch of a collaborative staff bank in West Yorkshire. We wanted to be able to offer staff more choice at more locations, whilst reducing agency costs and offering trusts a pool of trained staff to support with workforce supply.

This project involved a broad number of activities, such as creating steering groups, connecting suppliers with the trusts, creating staff engagement surveys to understand appetite, developing new internal collaborative processes for onboarding staff, developing a comms plan to target audiences and managers, and ultimately making sure staff at the trusts are happy and engage with the new collaborative bank.

## What were the key focuses for this collaborative project?

**Interoperability between workforce management systems was an absolute key focus** for everyone involved in the collaborative bank, something the team had previously experienced some challenges with. **All three trusts involved use Allocate Optima for their rostering, which supported system interoperability.**

As part of this project, we were working with staff who are doing things above and beyond their normal day job, who are extremely busy. So, it was really important that we worked closely with the implementation team and RLDatix.

This was a complex project, so it was vital that we made sure we had the right team in place and worked to clear timescales, supported by RLDatix.

The implementation process went smoothly. **The main challenges were ensuring we had the right people, in the right room, at the same time.**

There were several calls that were pivotal in breaking down the different elements of implementation, specifically when it came to skills alignment and mapping the different grades and roles. RLDatix hosted a call with each trust, providing a clear understanding of what had to be mapped and then compared with the other trusts involved, to ensure there was a collaborative approach throughout.



## How did the pilot and launch go?

Firstly, I would recommend a pilot to anyone launching this kind of project. It highlighted some teething problems and system specific issues that weren't aligning properly, which is exactly what a test is for.

The first part of the pilot involved gauging interest from staff in all three trusts around the appetite to test out the collaborative. We had so many staff members responding and wanting to be involved in the pilot, confirming to us that a collaborative bank is something that staff really did want.

The next step was to find people that ticked all the right boxes for the pilot, which wasn't as easy as we first imagined due to training requirements. For anyone else who is thinking of creating a collaborative bank, I'd recommend thinking ahead about the exact criteria needed to test the bank, so you know you are testing with the right people.

**We piloted and launched the collaborative bank with the trusts' registered nurses and support workers. Skills mapping for the remaining groups (AHPs, scientific & therapeutic groups and admin & estates) is a little more complex, so is taking a bit more time to align before launching to these staff groups.**

## How important were shared expertise and experience to this project?

**This was extremely important. Having access to a team that had experience working with other collaborative banks was invaluable.** Collaborative staff banks are highly complex and working with several organisations can make it difficult to get everything to align. So, **we were put in touch with the team from the North Central London collaborative bank, which was so helpful and provided us with so many insights we wouldn't have otherwise had.**

Alex Martin, our Customer Success Specialist was an absolute dream to work with. He's a perfect example of someone who just gets it and understands why the trusts' wanted things a certain way. He was fantastic in listening to the trust concerns, and although he could not fix all issues, he ensured the trusts were heard when they suggested changes. Katie Milligan (CloudStaff Product Manager) had such a good understanding of the system and collaborative banks, generally. Every time I spoke with them, I got all the answers I needed, which helped push actions forward.

## What are your key learnings from this project?

**There are a couple of main takeaways I've learnt from this project:**



### Be prepared for some delays

The time you expect a project to take is often not the time it actually takes. It's good to keep senior colleagues in the loop, to set expectations if there are delays



### Try to keep up momentum across the teams

With so many different elements and people to consult, it's important to make people aware that their support will be needed right from the beginning. We experienced a few slight setbacks due to staff capacity.



### Ensure you have experts from all areas in the room from the start

As mentioned earlier, a key requirement for us was system interoperability, which we didn't have expert representation for in early meetings. So, involving the correct people and asking those key questions early on is important for the smooth running of the project.



### Get a good understanding of what each Trust needs early on

Different collaborative banks will have different needs, you may not need every system feature and functionality within a system. This helps streamline processes and cost, including understanding what payroll model the organisations are looking for and what best suits current temporary staffing processes.



## What benefits do you think the West Yorkshire Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Staff Bank offers staff?

I think there are multiple benefits:

**1 A pool of talented, trained people.** The trusts in the collaborative can now tap into a larger pool of talent. It's reassuring to have a group of qualified people that you know you can rely on, helping to ease the burden of staff shortages whilst knowing quality of patient care and patient safety won't be affected.

**2 Job flexibility and enrichment.** Not only might this mean staff can actually work at a location that is closer and/or more convenient to them, but it also increases the opportunity to learn more and develop their skills, as they will have more opportunities to work with different teams, departments and people. This form of job enrichment is a real benefit to enhancing staff experience and can support retention.

**3 System familiarity.** Staff across the three trusts already use the Allocate Optima rostering system. This familiarity means staff will be able to easily use the system and will need less training to pick up shifts using the new system. It will also mean temporary staffing teams are using a familiar system to manage shifts.

## In your opinion, how is this collaborative bank supporting national goals and priorities?

Nationally, system priorities are leaning towards collaborative working, so this project goes hand in hand with all those plans. It's quite evident in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan that workforce shortages continue to be a problem, so collaborative staff banks help to support and tackle those workforce challenges.

Staff flexibility is also a key NHS priority, which a collaborative staff bank really helps support, especially in offering more choice. Offering staff new

ways of collaborative working and increasing opportunities for enrichment supports the 'Train, Retain and Reform' ambitions in The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan and wider national priorities.

## What does the future look like?

Collaborative working is very important and right now this collaborative bank includes mental health trusts only. But if it works really well and we can see a steady increase in the amount of shifts being picked up it could expand to acute trusts, further helping to foster collaborative working, enhance staff experience and increase patient safety.

Collaborative banks also offer the opportunity to attract other members of staff, who maybe don't want a substantive role or are looking at potential retirement but would like the flexibility of a couple of shifts per week. This offering can support the retention element of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.

## Reflections from the project team

**"From the start of the project everyone was clear about the benefits of a collaborative bank and whilst there were many challenges to overcome it is great to see collaborative working at its best."**

Lindsay Jensen, Acting Chief People Officer, South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust

**"This project has the potential to see significant benefits, increasing the pool of available and well-trained health care workers who can pick up shifts across the three mental health Trusts and significantly reducing agency spend. It has been a real collaborative effort, bringing together key people to share their expertise to drive forward the project."**

Sonya Robertshaw, Strategic Workforce Lead, West Yorkshire Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Workforce Collaborative

**"Across West Yorkshire, it is important to that our NHS providers work well together to share good practice and develop initiatives that support quality services and efficient use of resources. Our Collaborative Bank project is seeking to do just that."**

Kier Shillaker, Programme Director

