



Improving the quality of exit feedback at King's College Hospital




About King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust:

With around 5,000 staff, King's provides a full range of local hospital services for over 700,000 people in the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. It has a worldwide reputation for its work in liver disease and transplantation, neurosciences, cardiac and haemato-oncology.

www.kch.nhs.uk

King's College Hospital, one of London's largest and busiest teaching hospitals, has doubled the return rate of its exit questionnaires, after replacing its paper-based process with an online solution.

The new system - provided and hosted by TalentDrain - issues reminders and it removes the administrative burden of having to manually aggregate the responses. It has enabled King's to collect more sophisticated and meaningful information and to compare the responses of specific departments, directorates and occupational groups. The resultant evidence and data, which is fed into the Trust's HR strategy, has significantly contributed to King's maintaining a low level of staff turnover.

King's College Hospital has long used exit questionnaires to gain feedback on why people leave. The standard procedure was to post a paper-based questionnaire to any permanent employee who handed in their notice, apart from those in training grades - such as junior doctors - who

move on as part of a rotation programme. The questionnaires were sent either to their unit or to their home address.

However a relatively low return rate prompted the Trust to consider an online solution.

"Exit feedback gives us information which influences our HR strategy," said Peter Absalom, Staff Resourcing Manager at King's College Hospital. "We're a people organisation, so our HR strategy contributes directly to our frontline delivery and hence to patient care. Our paper-based exit questionnaire only allowed us to collect basic information from leavers. Also, we had to input the responses manually into spreadsheets and it was difficult to do any comprehensive analysis of the findings. We felt an online solution would not only improve the quality of the information we collected but it would also reduce the administrative burden of aggregating the responses."



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Moving online

King's approached TalentDrain and selected its Reflections online exit questionnaire.

"Reflections is a cost effective online solution and it met our needs perfectly," said Peter Absalom. "We liked the 'look and feel' of the product. This is actually quite important for exit questionnaires because you're asking for feedback from people who've already started to disengage with the organisation. Trying to get them to complete anything can be a challenge."

Now when someone resigns, King's simply enters their email address into the TalentDrain system and that person then receives an email encouraging them to complete the online questionnaire.

"The product is very flexible and easy to use," said Peter Absalom. "It enables us to ask a lot more questions and to benchmark our results against other organisations. It only takes around eight minutes to complete and it has had an overwhelmingly positive response from those who have been through it. Because it's a web-based system, there's no impact on our server or network, so the technical implementation was very straightforward."

The system sends weekly reminders to anyone who hasn't completed the questionnaire.

"This is particularly useful as it means we don't have to spend time chasing up responses," said Peter Absalom.

Using Reflections, King's has improved its response rate for exit questionnaires from 20 per cent to 40 per cent.

"In the NHS, where a lot of surveys are undertaken, a 40 per cent return rate is extremely good," said Peter Absalom.

Responding to the feedback

The questionnaire provides a wealth of information.

"We now get very rich information coming through," said Peter Absalom. "The power of the product allows the data to be cut in many different ways. So, as well as getting better information about the organisation as a whole, we can drill deeper into various parts and compare the responses of specific departments, directorates and occupational groups such as doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals."

Issues around pay and career progression have proved to be key reasons behind the desire to move on.



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"Typically people want to further their career so they leave to progress an opportunity in another organisation," said Peter Absalom. "If positions were available, there's a good chance they'd stay but unfortunately we have a lack of promotion opportunities."



Feedback from the questionnaire has allowed the Trust to achieve some 'quick wins'.

"You can't change the pay system overnight or create new promotion opportunities overnight but there are other things that can be done if you're given the information," said Peter Absalom. "For example, we had feedback from individuals saying that a vending machine in their area would've made their life easier, because they were working shifts and the canteen was closed. So that's a quick and easy thing to do which helps to demonstrate that we're listening to staff feedback and responding."

Peter Absalom says he has been impressed with the 'return on investment' from using TalentDrain's online questionnaire.

"Getting good quality information means we can improve the talent and professionalism of our staff by responding to the feedback they're giving us," he said. "It makes a significant contribution to keeping our voluntary turnover low and that literally saves us millions of pounds in agency expenditure."

Onboarding new starters

King's now plans to trial TalentDrain's OnBoarder, an online questionnaire and diagnostic tool which measures the effectiveness of an organisation's recruitment and induction processes, and identifies the drivers that affect whether new starters will stay or leave.

"OnBoarder is a very exciting development," said Peter Absalom. "We want to engage new people and get them up-to-speed as quickly as possible. The NHS is an extremely competitive market for talent so we have to ensure that our recruitment process and our inductions are the best they can be. OnBoarder will help us to understand how closely people's expectations of the job and the organisation are being matched by the day-to-day reality. It will give a valuable insight into what we're doing well and where we need to focus our interventions to prevent new starters from leaving in their first year."

For more information, please call TalentDrain on +44 (0)870 760 6598 or e-mail info@talentdrain.com. www.talentdrain.com