

# North West Streamlining Success Stories

- **Workstream:** Core: Recruitment
- **Sub Region:** Greater Manchester



## Adoption of Factual References at WWL

### What challenges were there?

In September 2017, Wrightington, Wigan & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust (WWL) moved to the sole use of factual references when recruiting new starters. In the past, subjective references were provided for all staff, but implementing a factual reference-only policy meant the process could be managed centrally. It was hoped that this change would cut the time that managers had to spend writing references and speed up the request process.

However, it was envisaged that there might be resistance from some staff in the trust. There were also concerns about whether factual references could be recorded and monitored in the electronic staff record (ESR) system via the pre-hire inter-authority transfer (IAT) as efficiently as by using online application management system, TRAC.

### What was the aim?

The recruitment team at WWL aims to deliver top class and innovative employment policies. Solely using factual references to make the transfer of staff more efficient is a streamlining priority and an example of innovative employment practice. WWL wanted to ensure this new policy was implemented successfully.

### How was this achieved?

- WWL signed up to an MOU confirming commitment to North West Streamlining
- They engaged with key stakeholders to reduce opposition to changes in reference policy
- Roles in the team were assigned to manage incoming/ outgoing references
- A pilot in the Estates & Facilities division was run
- ESR process notes were created for the WWL HR Team to work from
- They invited ESR experts to meet with WWL's recruitment team to resolve any issues relating to the pre-hire IAT
- Regular updates to WWL recruiting managers and the Trust Board Workforce Committee were delivered
- The wider benefits of moving to factual references were cascaded to non-clinical divisions as well

**"We met with one of WWL's Recruitment Administrators. She was a big fan of requesting references via IAT and felt the system was very efficient. The only issue was that not all trusts responded; if all trusts did respond, she felt this would be the best way of requesting references."**

- Sally Jones, Implementation Project Officer for Greater Manchester, North West Streamlining team

### What were the results?

- Factual references have been fully implemented within WWL since 2017 via both IAT and TRAC
- Private sector employers have responded well, and this has cut hire times in some areas
- Where the pre-hire IAT cannot be used, factual references are still used via TRAC. They are generally returned more quickly than subjective references
- Reference check lapse times have reduced
- WWL thought that factual references would increase their recruitment team's workload. This has not been the case because requesting IATs often removes the need to apply for many references from separate line managers

### Want to find out more?

Please contact Wrightington, Wigan & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust's recruitment team for further information. E: [recruitment@wwl.nhs.uk](mailto:recruitment@wwl.nhs.uk)

**North West Streamlining Team Success Stories**

