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13 December 2021

Dear *Bank Nurse*

**Ref: Safe Staffing at University Hospitals Dorset**

As we head into our second winter in the current pandemic, I wanted to write to all our bank workers to thank you for your on-going support to the care of our patients here at University Hospitals Dorset.

The impact of the pandemic has been far reaching and, in the NHS, we are feeling it more than most. Not just caring for those who unfortunately are more severely affected by Covid-19 but also through continuing to run our services in new and challenging ways. With a workforce that like the general population is impacted upon by the pandemic with sickness, shielding and isolation.

During these challenging times we are especially reliant on the flexibility of our people to support safe staffing; often taking the difficult decision to reduce staffing in one area to make it safe in another. Anecdotally I often hear that our temporary workforce feel that they are moved more than others and I wanted to assure you that each move is individually managed by a senior independent nurse who assess' the risk; ensuring the best skill mix in both the releasing and receiving ward. The type of things that we consider in this decision process are:

- The skill set of the staff involved in the move
- Nurse in charge for both areas
- Expanded skill requirement versus need in both areas, for example intravenous drug administration.
- Enhanced care delivery requirement in both areas
- Acuity and Dependency in both areas

This decision-making process is supported by a robust set of policies and procedures which support safe staffing decisions and enable a corporate approach to the management and accountability of our decisions.

Within all of this we recognise the importance of staff being empowered to raise their concerns when they feel that care might be compromised, and we encourage open and honest conversations and explanations around safe staffing decisions.

Sadly however, we do have reported incidences of staff refusing to move or walking off shift and going home. This behaviour is extremely concerning as when staff leave their rostered shift, they are reducing the ability for those staff left on duty to provide safe, effective care to our patients.

Therefore, if you do have a concern about being moved, please escalate your concerns through your shift leader and wait for further instruction from either the Matron on Duty or Clinical Site Team.

Failure to follow this procedure may result in your ability to book further shifts through our bank being withheld whilst an investigation is undertaken and in the case of a registered nurse could lead to referral to the NMC.

Fortunately, incidences of staff simply leaving without notice are few and far between, but I felt best to inform you of our intention to formally manage these scenarios in the interest of safeguarding our patients.

Thank you once again for your on-going support and flexibility with regards to caring for our patients. The Trust is heavily reliant on our bank worker, you are an essential part of the organisation and we are most grateful for your contributions to care.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona J Hoskins', written in a cursive style.

Fiona J Hoskins

**Deputy Chief Nursing Officer**