

Serving nearly 3 million patients with one connected primary care workforce platform

How Greater Manchester created system-wide workforce
resilience - and saved money

In short:

- Primary care was fragmented across the system, with budget wasted on unnecessary agency staff and time wasted on clunky ways of managing staff
- Greater Manchester introduced simple e-rostering, connected directly to a system-wide workforce bank for all primary care organisations to draw from, powered by Lantum
- Within 6 months, 88% of practices had joined the platform, to manage staff efficiently and fill gaps with local workforce - with savings of £1.1million projected after one year.

Fragmented primary care, reliant on agencies

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (Greater Manchester) is a devolved body representing and managing the health and wellbeing budget for the 2.8 million people who live across its 10 CCGs. Like many systems, Greater Manchester was juggling a number of challenges.

Getting workforce visibility

Each of the hundreds of practices and services within Greater Manchester had its own staff relationships. However, across the system, there was no visibility of other local staff. This was challenging for system-level leadership, but also made life difficult for practice groups and hub services trying to plan and build their schedules.

Managing complicated schedules

The complexity of scheduling meant that the manual processes in use (e.g. Excel spreadsheets) were not fit for purpose. This problem was exacerbated further by the advent of COVID-19 - new sites and new staff types increased staffing complexity, while new regulations and requirements reduced the time available to manage it.

Finding additional staff

Finding locum staff was often time-consuming, unpredictable and stressful, requiring a lot of last-minute fumbling across a host of different media. Where staff couldn't be found through existing relationships, many had no choice but to go to recruitment agencies, whose high fees constituted a large budget item for many Greater Manchester health services.

The answer: connecting the workforce, system-wide

“When Greater Manchester were looking for a partner, Lantum were really the only provider offering a primary care platform. Providers can manage their relationships with the bank, and the bank can manage their relationship with the provider. It’s a simple process.” **Kerry Porter, Primary Care Workforce Programme Manager, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership**

To solve or alleviate these problems, Greater Manchester aimed to create a single shared primary care workforce bank, connecting all GPs with all practices and service providers in the area.

Considering many of these CCGs were less than half an hour's drive apart, they were geographically able to benefit from sharing their staff. And by creating a pool of staff that were available to work, under-utilised members of the workforce could be identified and redirected to places under greater strain, to ensure a closer fit of patient demand with workforce supply. These users would be able to easily find work across all 10 CCGs, ensuring that organisational boundaries didn't get in the way of local staff helping patients.

What they needed next was a technology platform through which they could enable an intelligent, collaborative digital workforce bank. In Salford and Trafford CCGs, all Extended Access services and GP practices in Salford and Trafford had been using Lantum successfully for over 2 years. Lantum's strong track record within the area, combined with its ease of use, made it the best option.

Making it happen

- **CREATING THE BANK**

Implementation began by uniting in the workforce bank all GPs who had already created a profile on Lantum; Greater Manchester also worked with the National Performers list to invite other GPs in the area to join. Next, all existing Lantum practices were informed of their new access to the shared workforce bank and its benefits.

This required close-knit partnership, not only between Lantum and Greater Manchester, but also between all 10 CCGs in the area, each represented by their own workforce lead, who was consulted on decisions and best ways to roll out locally.

- **ROLL-OUT BY NEED**

Subsequent roll-out was conducted according to need. Greater Manchester's sitrep tool categorised workforce capacity by a traffic light system; practices flagged as red or amber were contacted directly to set them up with immediate access to the bank. As the project was launched in April, those who were responding to COVID-19 and needed additional workforce to scale up COVID hubs were also contacted.

Next, practices at risk of future disruption were targeted, such as those that showed 100% capacity on the sitrep tool, but only had one working GP, which would leave them in need of extra staff in the case of illness or annual leave.

Lastly, remaining practices were contacted to ensure they could access the bank before they needed it. This way, the bank could act as a level of coverage that is quicker, easier and cheaper to use than agencies.

- **USING THE PLATFORM**

Once onboarded, providers could create sessions in a calendar, then assign them to their preferred staff members. Where there were gaps, they could then publish the session to the workforce bank, either wholesale, or to a specified 'Priority Access' group of staff, who could apply to available sessions first.

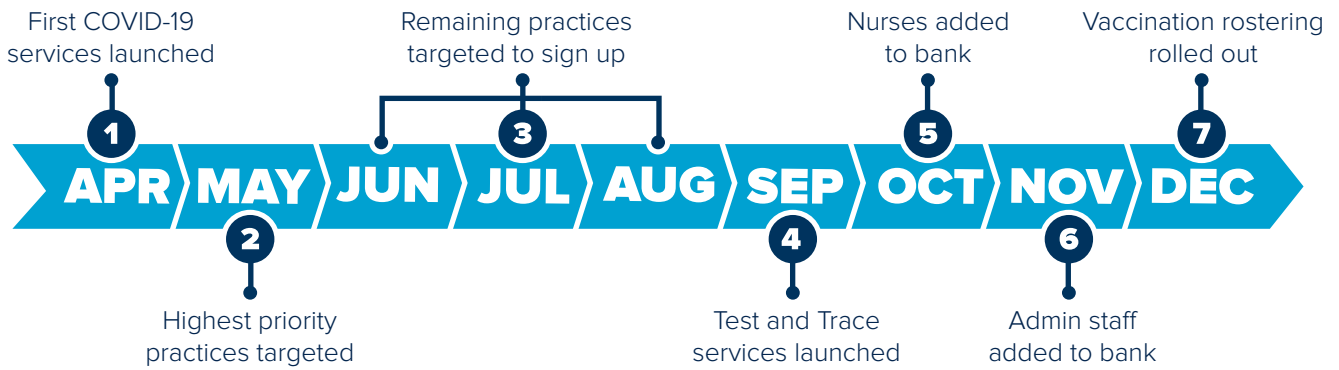
Staff within the bank were notified of new work available for them, either through the Lantum website or the mobile app. They could also search Lantum for work within a set distance, or at the practices that they regularly worked with.

- **TRAINING & TIPS**

After setting up their account, all users were given training according to their own unique case, such as the particular problems they were dealing with, as well as their history: for example, whether they had previously used Lantum or were completely new to the platform. Welcome packs were also distributed to facilitate a quicker start.

Practices were also sent automated emails with tips on how to get the most out of the platform. The practice engagement team at Lantum also conducted calls to check that practices were confident with the system and had all the information they needed about the workforce bank.

Services launched



The results:

1005 staff

signed up to the workforce bank, spread across

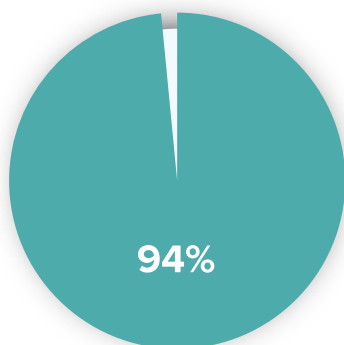
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different staff types

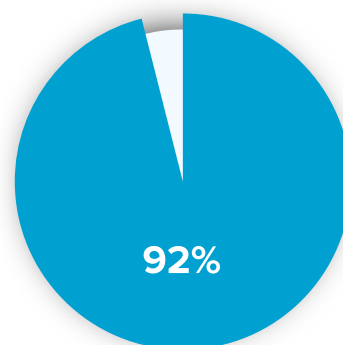
394 practices

onboarded onto Lantum, out of 447 total practices in Greater Manchester

88% onboarded within **6 months** of the project's launch



94% fill rate across all hubs posting on Lantum in Greater Manchester



92% fill rate across all practices posting on Lantum in Greater Manchester

Used by practices, walk-in centres, GP streaming in hospitals, COVID hubs, acute home visiting services, extended access hubs, 111 centres, vaccination hubs

From fragmented and time-consuming, to streamlined and connected

The streamlining of the scheduling and staffing process means that services can be expanded or easily changed without incurring a need for additional admin staff; simplification also means experienced staff can feel confident in delegating to more junior staff and reclaim time for higher-value work.

Plus, by connecting providers and staff on one common platform, the channels of communication between them have been cleanly integrated. Instead of trying to find staff by calling agencies, sending messages to Whatsapp groups, or emailing or texting individual GPs, operations managers can post available sessions onto Lantum for staff to apply for directly.

From dependent on agencies, to saving over £1 million

By minimising and often entirely eliminating the need for expensive recruitment agencies, providers can conserve valuable budget and direct it towards longer-term investments. Practices have other options for their staffing, and are no longer 'held to ransom on price' by agencies, as one Greater Manchester operations manager described it.

Had Greater Manchester practices paid for agency staff over the last 6 months, instead of filling gaps with staff from the workforce bank and Lantum's network, they would have had to pay £715k in fees for agencies charging a 30% premium. After a year of partnership, the workforce bank is projected to save Greater Manchester over £1.1 million. And this figure doesn't take into account savings in time or administrative resources.

From limited visibility, to data-driven decisions

With Lantum, Greater Manchester can easily see workforce demand across the area. With monthly reporting, they can track how many hours have been posted in total, whether at hubs or at practice sites, as well as how they are recovering from COVID-19, and where that recovery is.

The real-time data is also accessible on-demand, giving a live overview of the uptake of the workforce bank at any moment in time. This information can then be used to help with workforce planning in the future, ensuring a more effective allocation of budget.

Truly connected, system-wide working

The Lantum team are responsive, pragmatic, with a can-do attitude to problem-solving. And I really underestimated the Rota tool. For someone using it every day, their lives are made so much easier. And the data we get from Lantum is invaluable – we wouldn't have had the same level of insight without it. Kerry Porter, Primary Care Workforce Programme Manager, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership

Not only has Greater Manchester created an on-demand workforce bank to underpin the resilience and efficiency of their services, but by implementing a scalable platform to manage both their staffing and e-rostering, they provide a valuable tool for all their operations.

This project therefore represents an early example of successful system-level workforce management: the sharing and deploying of resources through one common platform, to deliver truly integrated services.



Get in touch via
enquiries@lantum.com