

Arranging Vaccination Shifts Took Hours. Now It Takes Minutes



"It's doing exactly what they said it would."

Dr Richard Berkley CLINICAL DIRECTOR, NETWORK 4

The COVID-19 vaccination programme was a triumph of science. Now, surgeries need a triumph of administration to ensure staff are available to deliver it. HireHand's app is making staff scheduling a job that takes minutes not hours.

Network 4 is a group of four GP surgeries that have come together to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine in their corner of Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Staff from each of the surgeries are pitching in to vaccinate their local communities while a team of volunteers are acting as on-site marshals, ensuring social distancing and steering patients in the right direction.

But creating a system for scheduling volunteers from scratch has proved a huge headache for volunteer coordinator (and retired GP) Janet Spence. Through a complicated combination of Excel spreadsheets, WhatsApp and direct phone calls, she has been spending 3-4 hours every week scheduling - hours she really doesn't have to spare...

"Even then," she explains, "I still wasn't sure how many people would turn up as there was no easy way of confirming and communicating with the staff who were coming. We struggled to deal with late cancellations - which left us doing a last-minute manual call-around which isn't ideal for us or our volunteers."

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Dr Janet Spence
NETWORK 4

The demands on Janet's time grew even greater when she became a vaccinator. "Suddenly her attention was split. We realised we were going to need someone else to handle the organisation," says Richard, clinical director.

"The time we spend scheduling has dropped from 3-4 hours to around 10 minutes a week"

Debbie Gadd
PRACTICE MANAGER
NETWORK 4



Push not pull

Janet's experience was inevitable. Even the best traditional staffing tools 'pull' staff into a schedule, which may work for regular, repeating shifts but which descends into chaos in the face of last-minute change. HireHand's app, however, is a dynamic scheduling tool that 'pushes' shift invitations out to staff. The tech uses an advanced matching algorithm that rank-orders volunteers by skills, travel time, the shifts they enjoy most, how fast they usually respond, their notice preferences, favoured days and more. Then it invites them in sequence.

"When I read about it I thought it was interesting so I spoke to the HireHand team and so far it's done exactly what they said it would," confirms Richard who, rather than requiring an additional coordinator, has been able let Janet vaccinate whilst Practice Manager Debbie Gadd has taken on the co-ordinator role.

Instant onboarding, instant results

As with all things vaccine related, speed is essential. Network 4 had an initial onboarding conversation at 1pm on Day 1. Debbie was operating her account the same day. The next time she was back in the office her volunteers had registered and were already accepting shifts. Two weekends into using HireHand, Network 4 has seen all its shifts filled every day.

"We didn't really have any unfilled space issues," confirms Richard. "It

was more the time taken to fill them – the to-ing and fro-ing, the changing, the spreadsheet filling, the checking and the double-checking. All of that has gone. We've been filling the shifts so quickly."

"I'd say the time we spend scheduling has dropped from 3–4 hours to around 10 minutes a week," adds Debbie. "And our volunteers love the app too because they no longer need to monitor a busy WhatsApp chat

group or have their day interrupted by requests to fill shifts."

"HireHand have been really good about tailoring the app to individuals and helping them get into the system", says Richard, conscious that not all the volunteers are confident app users. "They've been absolutely fine. Initially a bit scared of it, perhaps, but they got into it really quickly. Some of them are now impressing their grandchildren by using it!"

Improvements at pace

The HireHand team has remained on hand to support Richard, Debbie, Janet and the team throughout the launch, answering volunteer questions via the chat facility - and all volunteers are now happily engaging with the app, accepting or rejecting shifts that are tailored to their preferred availability.

One improvement Debbie requested was to book shifts by quarter hours (rather than the more traditional 30 or 60 minute intervals). HireHand implemented the amends urgently, and the change went live with a tech update at the end of the first week.



"I appreciate HireHand's flexibility and working at pace with such a light touch."

Dr Richard Berkley
CLINICAL DIRECTOR
NETWORK 4

Including vaccinators

"Marshals are just the first step in the implementation of the HireHand app," explains Richard. "Their jobs are similar, so we started there to get ourselves familiar with the system. We're now setting out plans to include the vaccinators. That is more involved and there are a few points we need to finesse because there's more variety in the roles of vaccinators (paid/unpaid/senior clinician/not-so-senior). That makes the set-up a little more involved but I can already see having spent all week trying to fill in different shifts with different vaccinators that it should work like a dream once it's up and running.

"With HireHand it's so much easier...together we can make this altogether less painful and reach as many people as fast as we can with the vaccine."

Dr Richard Berkley CLINICAL DIRECTOR, NETWORK 4

"If we can do this with our vaccinators it will make things so much easier."

Impact on the vaccination effort

"There are many people out there willing to help the collective effort but few people at the hub trying to set all this up," says Richard, identifying one of the key issues of vaccine rollout. "If you can make the

hub person's job that bit easier you can avail yourself of all this goodwill so much more easily. That's hard to do individually but with Hirehand it's so much easier. I'm really chuffed we've started this journey because having taken these first few steps it's doing exactly what they said it would.

"I hope together we can make this altogether less painful and reach as many people as fast as we can with the vaccine."

