

Richard Driscoll Award Finalist 2025



Inflammatory Bowel Disease Pathway Navigator Programme



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INTRODUCTION

Identifying the gap in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) care

Clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) were spending much of their time on administrative tasks, which was having a negative impact on direct patient care and patient pathways.

Delays in treatment, reduced patient contact and limited clinic availability caused bottlenecks in patient pathways, and communication challenges between the hospital and community teams.

- **The challenge:** With a shortage of IBD gastroenterologists, there was a clear need for a strong, nurse-led approach to maintain high-quality care.
- **The solution – the IBD pathway navigator:** introduced following consultation with senior staff and the Trust’s management, the IBD pathway navigator role was created to streamline services, improve patient pathways, and enhance patient care.

METHODOLOGY

The IBD pathway navigator role was the first of its kind within the Trust, focusing on the long-term management of chronic conditions. Following agreement on funding, supported by the Cancer Services team, the post was successfully filled within 1 month. Administrative tasks that could be delegated were identified, freeing CNSs to refocus on direct patient care and clinical responsibilities.

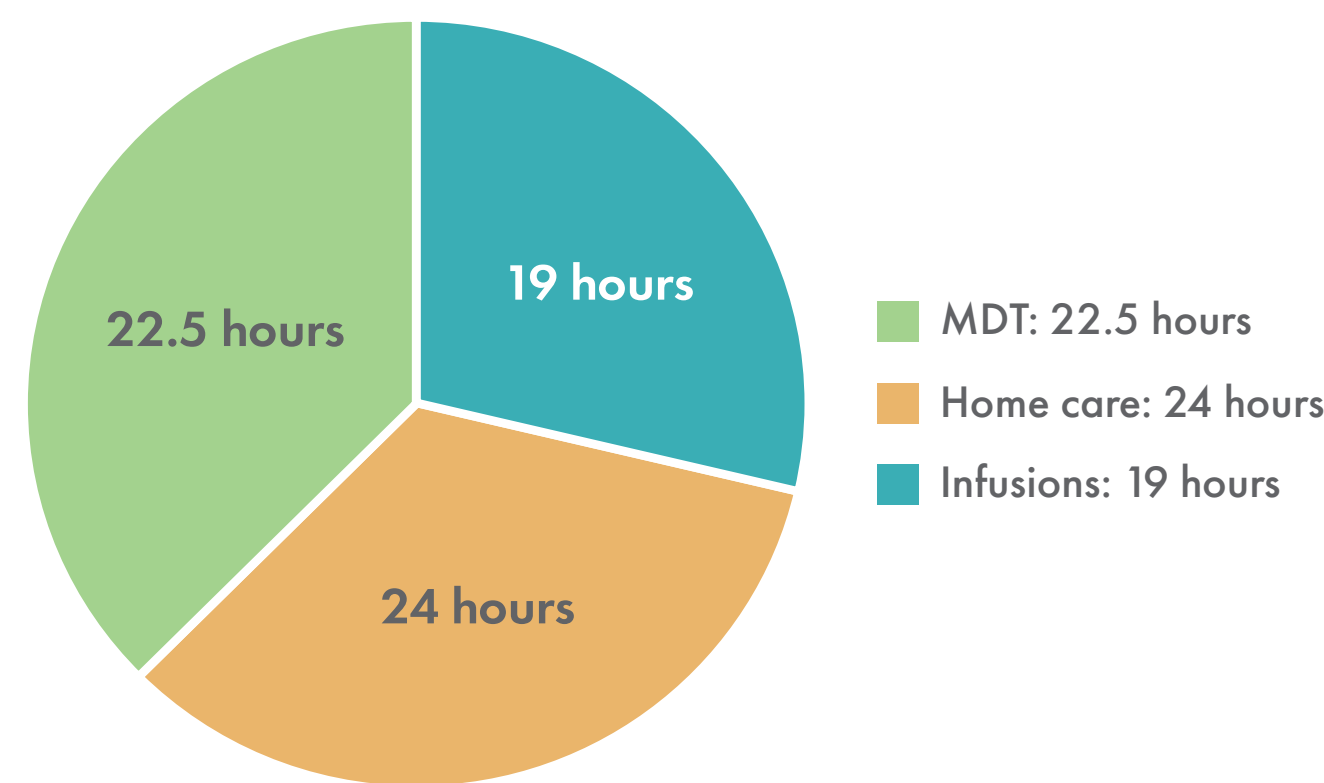
RESULTS & OUTCOMES

Over the past 2 years, the IBD pathway navigator has significantly enhanced service development and operational efficiency. Key achievements include:

- **Data management:** Analysis of nursing activity relating to blood monitoring, maintenance of advanced therapies, and communication between departments, as well as with primary and secondary care.
- **Advanced therapy pathway support:** Streamlining pathways to improve patient safety and efficiency. This included reducing points of contact for prescriptions, ensuring clear documentation of prescription locations, minimising missed infusions or home delivery delays, and coordinating repeat prescriptions, monitoring and consultant reviews.
- **Clinic and appointment management:** Organising nursing, emergency, endoscopy, advanced therapy induction and 12-week follow-up clinics to improve patient access and flow, while reducing the impact on central booking services.
- **Multidisciplinary team (MDT) support:** Redesigning and documenting IBD MDT meetings to strengthen communication and continuity of care.
- **Education coordination:** Organising nurse education sessions, pharmaceutical company representative visits, and collaboration with community teams.

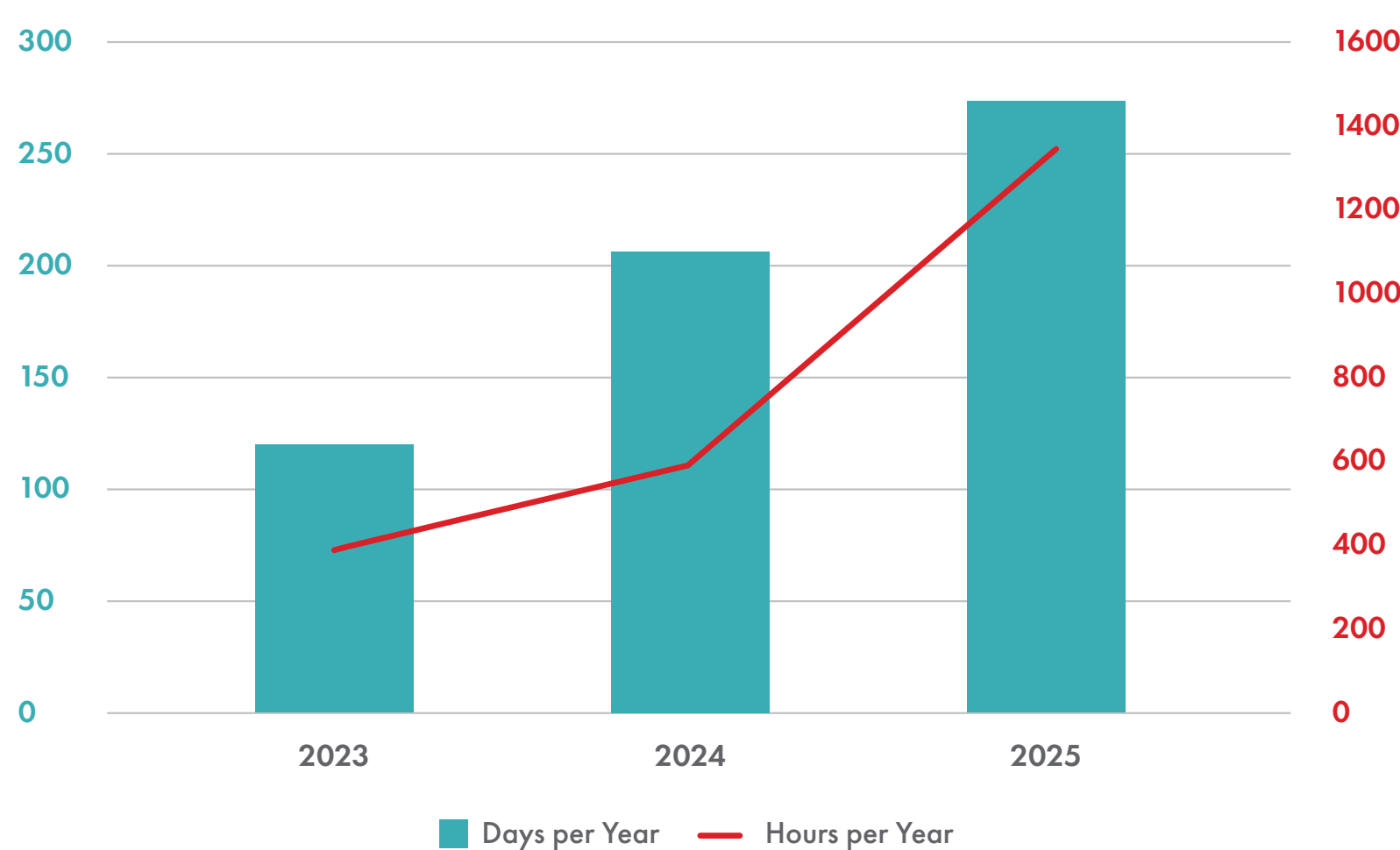
Data collected and analysed on the actual workload of the IBD nursing team provided evidence to support the creation of 2 additional full-time CNS posts and a part-time navigator role. This evidence underpinned a successful business case, enabling the restructuring of IBD services through job planning and staff upskilling. By taking on the administrative tasks, the navigators have freed up CNS capacity to focus on direct clinical care, driving measurable service improvements.

CNS hours saved in first month of navigator programme: 65.5



“The pathway navigators are the glue that holds the IBD team together, facilitating high-quality patient care.”
- IBD consultant

Increase in advice line availability from 2023 to 2025



EVALUATION

Pathway navigators have been pivotal in the development of the IBD service in Salisbury:

- **Improved patient access:** Increased clinic capacity, improved follow-up availability, and extended advice line hours (Mon–Fri) for direct CNS support.
- **Faster support and treatment:** Patient feedback reported that patients had faster access to support and treatment.
- **Enhanced efficiency:** Improved MDT efficiency within the Trust and in primary care.
- **Added value:** Reduced duplication of work, strengthened collaboration and working relationships, and provided both patient and financial benefits.
- **Raised profile:** Highlighted the IBD team’s profile to senior management and the Trust Board.
- **Scalable model:** Framework shared with other specialties, demonstrating adaptability and potential for wider service development.