Contents

Section one
03 Introduction

Section two
08 Recruitment and retention plans: an overview of themes, issues, solutions and key messages

Section three
14 Recruitment and retention plans in practice: case studies and related sources of advice and information

Section four
42 What counts in recruitment and retention: summary results from a survey of adult social care employers

Section five
44 Further information and advice

46 Appendix
47 Notes
Introduction

This is a recruitment and retention toolkit for the adult social care sector. It is a practical resource designed to help care providers – particularly smaller organisations – to improve the way they recruit staff and keep them on board. This guide emphasises the importance of planning your approach to recruitment and retention.

Good recruitment plans lead to higher rates of retention. If you take the time to attract the right people to work with you and carry out a thorough recruitment process, you are more likely to retain better quality staff for longer.

Similarly, a good system for keeping staff can attract people to your organisation. If you offer learning opportunities, develop a culture where staff feel valued, and offer good terms and conditions, more people are likely to want to work for you, and they will want to stay too.

Attracting and keeping the right staff leads to better outcomes for the people who use your service, which leads in turn to a better reputation.

So there is a strong business case for taking more time to consider your recruitment and retention.
This toolkit aims to help providers to improve their own plans and activities by providing information and advice over four themes:

1. Attract more people to your organisation
2. Take on the right people
The themes are colour coded throughout for ease of reference.

The toolkit is illustrated with case studies, which provide lots of ideas for how to improve the way you recruit and retain staff.

3

Foster talent and increase skills

4

Keep your staff
Workforce planning

Having an overall workforce plan that fits into the purpose of the service – and the aims of the business – is vital. Without a long-term plan, employers can end up with a mismatch between the business plan and the workforce.

You may need to think about reconfiguring your workforce to have different skills or be organised in different ways. So it is often useful to take a step back from day to day activities and think about what your current recruitment systems are leading towards.

For example, are your staff mainly older people with no younger colleagues? And if so, does this make planning for promotion or replacing retiring/resigning staff difficult? How do your staff compare to those in similar organisations nearby – and what effect will this have on your business?

Gaining detailed information about your workforce is the first step to planning your recruitment needs. The National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) is one way to see how your workforce compares with that of similar local businesses. It is free to sign up and can help you to make informed business decisions by providing tools and information for workforce planning. There are other benefits for those organisations signed up, including the ability to apply for funding to support staff training.

Links to this and many other resources are provided in the final section of the toolkit.
### Section two
Recruitment and retention plans: an overview of themes, issues, solutions and key messages

#### Attract more people to your organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in attracting people to your organisation</td>
<td>Targeting jobseekers by partnering with Jobcentre Plus. Find out how you can get involved with the range of initiatives they are currently promoting such as pre-employment training</td>
<td>Attracting unemployed jobseekers <em>(Anchor)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in attracting younger people to a career in social care</td>
<td>Working with colleges to engage with initiatives such as sector based work academies</td>
<td>Sector based work academies <em>(Ashley Care)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates having unrealistic perceptions of what care work entails, resulting in high turnover after employment</td>
<td>Training staff to become ‘I Care...Ambassadors’ and promote working in social care. Think about supporting the I Care...Ambassador service in your area and signing up to the I Care...Ambassador register</td>
<td>Ambassadors for Care <em>(The Hollybank Trust)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large numbers of application forms sent out and only a small number being returned</td>
<td>Applicant visits and ‘taster’ shifts prior to submitting application</td>
<td>Candidate visits and taster shifts – sourcing applicants with a genuine interest in care work <em>(Stallcombe House)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting your organisation to stand out</td>
<td>Creating simple, effective adverts and making the recruitment process personal</td>
<td>A personal touch to recruitment <em>(Home Instead)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. **Attract more people to your organisation**
Key messages

- Most staff will come from local sources, so local activity to promote and explain the purpose of your service will attract people in the area.

- Make links with schools and colleges to attract younger people to care and partner with Jobcentre Plus to run sector based work academies and provide pre-employment training. Consider offering your care setting as a location for training.

- Put thought into online recruitment. Consider carefully how your organisation is portrayed. Think about how the internet can be used to simplify the application process, and consider established systems such as the government’s Universal Jobmatch.

- Introducing bank positions, work placements, flexible working and ‘taster shifts’ offers a good opportunity to allow potential candidates to experience care before applying for jobs. Make sure all visits are made with the consent of people using the service and with all dignity and privacy considerations made.

- Inviting potential job applicants to visit a care site for an informal chat before applying for a job breaks down barriers and promotes more genuine applicants.

- Employers can run I Care...Ambassador services and use I Care...Ambassadors to promote working in care and break down negative perceptions.

- Make the most of opportunities to demonstrate how you invest in staff, appealing to people from the offset who have longer-term ambitions.
# Take in the right people

## Issues

- Interview and selection inconsistencies across the organisation and varying levels of success with subsequent appointments
- Parts of the organisation not getting the selection process right
- A lack of candidates who are flexible and knowledgeable
- Time and resources spent on interviews, and nervous candidates

## Solutions

- Creation of a standardised interview and scoring process with the emphasis on testing for values linked to behaviours rather than competences
- Monitoring recruitment performance
- Creative recruitment – consider local stakeholders
- Introducing group assessments

## Case studies

- Interviewing for values – and 21% less staff turnover *(Anchor)*
- A more systematic look at your recruitment *(Agincare)*
- Recruiting service users *(Care Management Group)*
- Group assessment: saving resources and getting more out of candidates *(Orchard Care Homes)*

## Key messages

- Introducing a standardised interview process based on behavioural rather than competence-based questions can result in recruiting candidates with the right qualities and values for care work, thereby increasing retention rates.
- Introducing group assessments for the recruitment of staff can bring out more in candidates and can save on time and resources too.
- Monitoring how your selection process is working across the organisation can provide information that is essential for taking on the right people.
- Engaging and training people need services can be a flexible way to help address recruitment needs locally.
## Foster talent and increase skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping hold of new recruits</td>
<td>Introducing an Apprenticeship programme offering training on the job and promoting clear career pathways</td>
<td>Apprenticeship scheme (Barchester Healthcare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing structured support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in recruiting motivated supervisors</td>
<td>Introducing a fast-track scheme for supervisors</td>
<td>Fast-tracking supervisors (Carewatch Ipswich)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing new recruits due to the length of time taken to get criminal records checks</td>
<td>Work shadowing</td>
<td>Engaging new recruits through work shadowing (Rainbow Care Services Ltd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff confidence and job satisfaction</td>
<td>Introducing structured support</td>
<td>Structuring support and development (Meera House Nursing Home)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key messages

- Offering an Apprenticeship scheme sends a message to job candidates that there are career development opportunities within a company and increases levels of retention.

- Introducing fast track or graduate schemes is a positive way to promote career opportunities. Consider using the Manager Induction Standards produced by Skills for Care to establish a career development programme for suitable staff.

- Offering structured and regular supervision sessions allows time for reflection on practice and staff development.

- Detailed induction, regular appraisals and individual performance development plans engage staff and demonstrate to them the value that organisations place on training and development.

- Work shadowing is an effective way of training and engaging staff while they are waiting for a criminal records clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service. This policy also has positive outcomes for senior staff and for people who use the service.
# Keep your staff

## Key messages

- Recruit the right people in the first place. Consider a selection process that tests people for the attributes needed for staying in the job, for example a process which identifies people who are self-assured and resilient.

- Making staff feel valued and important is key to increasing retention rates. Creating the right culture where staff are encouraged and where they can enjoy work is essential.

- Providing free training and personal development engages employees and will be another factor in staff deciding to stay.

- Providing set shift patterns recognises the importance of supporting the personal lives of staff. Others may prefer flexible shift patterns to accommodate personal circumstances.

## Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Too many care workers leaving soon after joining the organisation     | Design the recruitment process to test people for the key attributes for staying in the job | Recruiting care workers with real tenacity  
  *(The Good Care Group)*                                                  |
| Engaging and retaining staff                                          | Caring for staff with a personal touch                                     | A personal touch  
  *(Helen McArdle Care)*                                                  |
| Keeping individuals you value                                          | Investing in and meeting the needs of individuals                         | Individual engagement  
  *(Woodford Homecare)*                                                   |
| Engaging and retaining staff with language and other skill needs      | Providing English classes and set shift patterns                           | English classes and set shift patterns – zero vacancies in 18 months!  
  *(Swanborough House)*                                                   |

## Case studies

- **Recruiting care workers with real tenacity**  
  *(The Good Care Group)*

- **A personal touch**  
  *(Helen McArdle Care)*

- **Individual engagement**  
  *(Woodford Homecare)*

- **English classes and set shift patterns – zero vacancies in 18 months!**  
  *(Swanborough House)*
Many care providers report that they struggle to attract potential job applicants to their organisation for various reasons, including perceived low pay, unsociable hours, lack of experience and/or commitment, and negative perceptions of adult social care and the career opportunities that it can offer. Many providers also specifically report that they struggle to attract younger staff to the care sector.

There are ongoing and long-term actions that providers can take in addressing these recruitment issues. What appears to be key is building links in the local community, including schools, colleges, universities, GP practices and faith communities. Building such links involves promoting services at careers evenings and job information events, renting space on public notice boards and inviting external colleagues and potential job applicants to visit your care setting.

Allowing potential candidates to learn about individual care organisations through visits and marketing literature also appears to help attract them to care work.

Attracting those job roles that can fall between health and social care to work in the care sector, such as nurses and occupational therapists, can prove challenging. Consider seeking out nurses who are registered but not working in the local area, or forming a pool of nursing staff with other employers such as hospitals and GP practices.
Anchor is England’s largest non-for-profit provider of housing and care to older people which offers a wide range of services including residential care homes and retirement living. Anchor supports diversity within the workforce and as part of this focus aims to promote vacancies to long-term unemployed people.

Anchor developed a pre-employment training course to promote working in the care sector. Modules include job roles within care, career prospects, the role of a care assistant, health and safety, legislation, person-centred customer service and working for Anchor, its vision and values.

A pilot was initially run in the Coventry area where Anchor built local links with Coventry City Council, government-funded providers, Jobcentre Plus, colleges and community groups to promote joint working. Anchor HR consultants delivered courses and presentations to groups of jobseekers.

Sessions were followed up by an open day at an Anchor site which guaranteed an initial interview to those who expressed an interest in pursuing a job with Anchor. The open day also gave the jobseekers an opportunity to experience a care environment, probably for the first time.

The pilot was a success and 18 months later staff retention has been good. Two Anchor staff members who were successful through this initiative have a good story to tell. Melinda attended a presentation and open day. She was interested in a care assistant vacancy; however her previous employment skills led to her being offered a role as an activity co-ordinator. Bessey, who joined as a care assistant, is now completing key working responsibilities. Both really love their job which has transformed their lives from demoralised jobseekers to a happy, rewarding life style.

Anchor now has a national initiative linking with Jobcentre Plus and local providers to promote the benefits of working in the care sector and give visibility of vacancies to local unemployed individuals.

For further information visit: www.anchor.org.uk or contact: wendy.wood@anchor.org.uk
Creating a sector based work academy (Ashley Care)

Issue: Difficulty of attracting younger people to a career in social care
Solution: Working with colleges to create sector based work academies

Ashley Care is the largest private provider of home care services contracted to Southend on Sea Borough Council.

When looking to recruit new care workers, Ashley Care noticed what the local Jobcentre was doing – they had commissioned a local training provider and together they delivered the Level 2 Certificate in Preparing to Work in Health and Social Care.

Ashley Care contacted Jobcentre Plus to see if they could jointly run a sector based work academy for jobseekers. Ashley Care agreed to attend the training provider’s office to talk about the care profession in general and to also give jobseekers some work experience over a two week period, at the end of their certificate training.

At the end of the work experience all the jobseekers were guaranteed an interview, which would benefit them in gaining employment either with Ashley Care or with alternative employers. They had 12 people on work experience, all 12 were interviewed and six people were taken on.

The six people have now completed their Common Induction Standards and are looking to obtain their Intermediate Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care. Jobcentre Plus have now requested that another academy is started to continue the flow of new employees.

Funding for the training was paid for by Jobcentre, so Ashley Care made the most of this opportunity to recruit. The sector based work academy has improved their recruitment of staff with the right training and skills from the outset.

For further information contact: vikki.jackson@ashleycare.com
The Hollybank Trust is a charity with 490 employees. It provides residential care for children and young adults with physical disabilities.

The Care Ambassador project involves care staff volunteering to go into local communities and speak to schools, colleges and community centres about their work. This approach is intended to give individuals a realistic view about the care industry, and to dispel any negative preconceptions. The trust’s recruitment strategy also includes making good contacts with Jobcentre Plus staff as well as applicants in order to convey a positive image of the industry and enthuse the Jobcentre staff to promote it to those looking for work.

Initially, it was difficult to find staff willing to volunteer for this project as they were not accustomed to giving presentations to groups of people. However, the Hollybank Trust has found that over time more staff are volunteering for this project. Retention has also improved as being care ambassadors has given variety to their usual role and increased staff enthusiasm. Through this project, staff are understanding the value of their jobs and consequently are less inclined to leave.

The project is on-going and evidence of success is mainly in the improved retention that Hollybank is experiencing. Although some staff have been recruited through Jobcentres, the real results in recruitment are not yet available as it is targeted at the future workforce.

For further information contact: k.coombes@hollybanktrust.com

Skills for Care has developed a new approach to support organisations promote social care in a clear, sustainable and accessible way. At the heart of the new model is an online register and resources bank where employers can register their I Care...Ambassador service and their individual I Care...Ambassadors. The resources bank is currently being developed to support employers running a service, providing materials for ambassadors to help develop skills, deliver activity and share ideas and good practice.

To find out more about becoming an I Care...Ambassadors and setting up an I Care...Ambassadors service visit: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/icareambassadors
Candidate visits and taster shifts – sourcing applicants with a genuine interest in care work (Stallcombe House)

**Issue:** Large numbers of application forms sent out and only a small number being completed and returned

**Solution:** Applicant visits and ‘taster’ shifts prior to submitting application

Stallcombe House is a residential community for adults with learning disabilities located in the South West of England, employing around 50 staff.

When recruiting care staff, it was found that even though some 20 or 30 application forms were being sent out in response to enquiries following an advertisement, only one or two completed application forms were actually received. For Stallcombe House, this was costly in both resources and time.

To tackle this issue potential job applicants have been required to visit and spend some time at Stallcombe House, meet staff and residents, have an informal chat and a look around. Only if they are still genuinely interested are they given an application form to complete.

Some applicants also work what’s referred to as a ‘taster shift’. This is designed to allow the potential applicant to see if they like the type of work involved and the working environment.

The policy is seen as beneficial to both sides because it allows applicants to make an informed choice on whether or not they wish to proceed with a full job application, and it allows Stallcombe House to save resources by sending out application forms only when they are likely to be completed. The home also only spends time interviewing and assessing those applicants whose interest in working there is genuine.

**For further information contact: stallfarm@eclipse.co.uk**

It is important to make sure visits are arranged with the consent of people using the service and with all dignity and privacy considerations made.
A personal touch to recruitment (Home Instead)

**Issue:** Getting your organisation to stand out  
**Solution:** Creating simple, effective adverts and making the recruitment process personal

Home Instead is a provider of home care services across the country. When opening in East Lancashire they decided to try a new approach to recruiting staff.

The aim was simple: to make it very personal. Carefully choosing the wording, Home Instead put out job adverts that read:

*Becoming a CAREGiver is a unique job with many rewards and enables you to build fulfilling and lasting relationships with your clients. This is care with a difference!*

- Previous experience is not necessary.
- You will be part of a friendly supportive team.
- We are able to offer flexible hours.
- You are not required to wear a uniform.
- We will offer you on-going support and training.

*Share your exceptional talents and skills to help elderly people remain independent and live the lifestyle they desire.*

Responses to the advert have been very positive and applicants said that it stood out from the rest.

Potential applicants are invited to a drop-in session at the office for a face to face chat and are sent a message confirming the address details and signposting to their Facebook page and Twitter account. The face to face meeting allows Home Instead to explain more about the role and the organisation, as well as hand out an application form (which they will only give out in person). Doing this adds a personal touch to the process and allows a relationship to develop.

Home Instead actively encourages its staff to come into the office at least once a week or more if they are passing, just for a coffee and chat. They feel that involving individuals in all aspects of the organisation and letting them know that they are a valuable part of the team is a great retention tool.

*For more information contact: ruth.radford@homeinstead.co.uk*
Make your adverts stand out
Sources of further information and advice for theme 1

**I Care...Ambassadors**
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/icareambassadors

**Men into care research**
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/research

**Advertise jobs using Universal Jobmatch**
www.gov.uk/advertise-job

**Sector route-way for social care (Skills for Care)**
Skills for Care has been working with Jobcentre Plus and other partners to provide a national sector route-way for adult social care.

The sector route-way is a form of support that can be offered to unemployed people to give them the skills and confidence to move into entry level jobs in the adult social care sector:
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/caresectorrouteway

**Starting a career in social care (Skills for Care)**
The Skills for Care website contains a useful introduction to social care careers and is a resource for care providers to point future employees to. It contains information on different job roles, case studies of those working in the sector and an etool on career pathways:
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/icare
Recruitment is not just about attracting people to your organisation. In social care, taking on the right people is of the upmost importance. Making sure your selection process is effective is the start of getting the best people on board – people who are also more likely to stay on.

The case studies in this section demonstrate some of the different policies that care providers have adopted in order to ensure a consistent and effective approach to recruitment, including the introduction of group assessments and interviews based on values linked to behaviours.

Care providers often report that recruitment is a time-consuming and resource-heavy process. However if the recruitment fails to find the right people and prepare them for sustaining employment the costs are far higher. So it is crucial that care providers take a systematic approach to recruitment and understand that good recruitment systems and policies lead to good rates of retention. Whether providers take a local, regional or national (head-office based) approach to recruitment is a matter for them to decide – what is most important is having consistent systems in place.

Care providers clearly need to adopt consistent systems for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and while many providers report that waiting for clearance is a barrier to recruitment, many have adopted effective strategies to train and develop staff in supervised or ‘shadowing’ form while their criminal records check is pending. Sources of information on DBS and employing ex-offenders are presented at the end of this section.
Anchor is the leading not-for-profit provider of care and housing for older people in England, employing approximately 10,000 staff.

Prior to having a recruitment team, hiring managers at Anchor Trust took care of their own recruitment utilising various methods, paying various costs and having variable results. One of the key aspects of recruitment and selection identified by an in-house team was the need for a standardised interview process.

Anchor Trust’s interview process identifies a number of key behaviours Anchor expects its staff to demonstrate, including service to customers and colleagues, and leadership skills. There is a bank of questions for each behaviour. A scoring system has been devised to ensure responses are graded consistently and fairly. A set of competence-based questions has been created for each role to test skills and knowledge, using the same scoring system.

The benefit to Anchor of the emphasis on behaviour questions is the acknowledgement that if Anchor has the right people with the right values, attitudes and behaviours, they can be provided with all the training and development they need to acquire the competences to succeed. This is particularly useful when interviewing applicants with no relevant experience but who can shine at interview by exhibiting the behaviours Anchor values. Anchor Trust has reduced staff turnover by 21% since introducing behavioural interviewing.

Although smaller providers may not have an in-house recruitment team, there is always scope to produce a bank of interview questions, reviewed regularly, that ensure that the staff you appoint are the ones you want to represent your home, service or organisation.
A more systematic look at your recruitment (Agincare)

**Issue:** Parts of the organisation not getting selection process right  
**Solution:** Systematic monitoring of recruitment

Agincare Group is a large provider of home care services with more than 20 offices around the UK and also owns 11 care homes. Although recruitment of care workers is locally organised, there is oversight from senior management.

Agincare found that they needed better information on the activity they were using to attract candidates and the recruitment performance of their local offices.

The organisation therefore developed and enforced a straightforward excel spread sheet to monitor recruitment performance and create performance conversion tables.

They focussed on the development of two main areas. Firstly, how many applicants were being generated to apply for Agincare jobs from all of the recruitment activity being used? Secondly, out of the people being referred to local offices, how many were actually going on to attain positions?

If, for example, an office only recruits a tiny proportion of applicants, it could be a clue that they are placing unnecessary restrictions on applications and either need barriers withdrawn or their skills developed. The aim is to remedy the cause of poor performance and improve efficiency.

This systematic approach allows Agincare to spot which offices are performing better than others in time to intervene where necessary. One finding was that potential employees were not contacted for some considerable time after making contact through a website – which was having a negative effect on the number of candidates who attended training. In offices where recruitment practice is less effective, staff can be coached and trained, learning from what is working better elsewhere.

Agincare believes that this more systematic approach to its recruitment will improve the consistency and effectiveness of its recruitment teams, which will improve the availability of local staffing.

For more information contact: mark.baker@agincare.com
Care Management Group (CMG) provides support services to people with learning disabilities, sensory impairments and mental health needs. In Hove, CMG has an indoor hydrotherapy pool with a spa area and changing facilities.

The pool didn’t have a designated cleaner and was often in need of servicing. CMG’s employment officer, who mainly works to support people who use services into work, suggested that they could employ one of their own service users to service the pool.

One tenant, who is registered blind and has a learning disability, was a good candidate for the job. CMG trained him on cleaning and organising the facilities. His training progressed well. Soon he was taking the lead, and in time became confident and independent in the position. Part of his role is to report any maintenance issues, and to check the chlorine and pH levels of the water.

He has gained experience, skills and income from the work – as well as pleasure and pride. CMG works to promote employment opportunities for people who use its service. In this case they saw an opportunity to recruit a known, responsible person and only needed to invest time in the training. Not only do they know their new employee well, but CMG also gain from flexibility since he lives so close by and can be asked to do overtime.

For more information contact: andrew.wasley@pureinnovations.co.uk
Case study

Group assessment: saving resources and getting more out of candidates
(Orchard Care Homes)

Issue: Resources and time taken up by recruitment
Solution: Introducing group assessments

Orchard Care Homes is a private residential care provider for older people, employing just under 1,600 staff. The organisation operates in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber.

When Orchard Care Homes was opening a new care home the HR team decided to try a new recruitment method of group assessment for ancillary staff and care assistants in order to save time on face-to-face interviews. This recruitment method has also revealed itself to be a very effective way of bringing the best out of those candidates who tend to be very nervous in one-on-one interviews.

Group assessments consist of an introduction to the organisation, group exercises and a questions and answers session at the end. The questions and answers session is a particularly valuable way for candidates to learn more about the terms and conditions of job vacancies and about Orchard Care itself. In a group session, a whole range of detailed questions may be asked and candidates gain a better understanding than they would if they were on their own.

Orchard Care has recruited approximately 25 people per new home using this method. In each of these homes this has amounted to four group sessions of three and a half hours each - a total of 14 hours. This compares with 75 hours of face-to-face interviews that would have been needed to appoint the same number of staff.

Linda Cotham, Deputy Manager at St Helen’s Hall, says “I found the assessment days much better as I am not very good at one-to-one interviews and I actually enjoyed the experience.”

For further information contact: lucy.sagcan@orchardcarehomes.com
Information on criminal records checks: the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/

Information on CQC DBS checks for registered managers
www.cqc.org.uk/organisations-we-regulate/registering-first-time/criminal-record-checks

CIPD Factsheet – pre-employment checks
This helpful factsheet covers: what employers need to consider, specific checks required when working with children and vulnerable adults, recruiting ex-offenders and eligibility to work in the UK.
www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/pre-employment-checks.aspx

Recruitment and selection toolkit to support small and medium sized employers (Skills for Care)
This toolkit provides employers with an overview of the recruitment and selection process, from the point at which the need to fill a vacancy is identified to welcoming a new member of staff into their new job.
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/smetoolkit

Employing personal assistants
Skills for Care has developed a toolkit to support people to employ their own personal assistants. It helps guide individual employers through the process of employing a personal assistant, what to do when they are working for you as well as helping you to understand your responsibilities as an employer and your legal obligations.
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/employingpas

Recruiting disabled people
Skills for Care has undertaken a project in co-production with Disability Rights UK and the British Association of Supported Employment to look at the recruitment, retention and progression of disabled people within the adult social care sector. An overview of the benefits and case studies are available at:
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment
Once job candidates have been successfully appointed it is essential to fully engage them from ‘day one’. It is widely understood that new members of staff conclude whether or not a setting is a good place to work within a few days, so in order to retain newly appointed staff leadership is crucial in ensuring that they receive a structured induction and timely training.

The case studies in this section of the toolkit outline good practice in providing structured training and development opportunities for staff, from work shadowing and supervision sessions to individual development plans. The provision of regular opportunities for staff to communicate with managers regarding their development results in staff feeling valued and supported, thereby increasing retention rates.

Giving supervised induction training while new members of staff have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks pending also helps to ensure that new staff remain engaged with the organisation throughout this process.

Providing structures for career development can prove invaluable for both recruitment and retention. Employers may wish to consider introducing Apprenticeships, graduate and fast track schemes to entice new job candidates and demonstrate that social care work can be a career rather than ‘just’ a job.

New recruits will perform better if they can see a clear career pathway in front of them.
Barchester Healthcare supports over 10,000 people at more than 200 locations. Barchester’s services include registered care and nursing, independent hospitals, supported living, outreach, short breaks and domiciliary care and support. It currently employs more than 17,000 staff.

In order to increase retention levels and to promote the career opportunities in the social care sector, Barchester introduced its Apprenticeship programme in 2003. The programme consists of accredited qualifications as well as functional skills in Maths and English.

The Apprenticeship programme means that apprentices can earn while they learn, develop their skills, follow a career and learn at their own pace. Barchester has found that the programme has achieved a measurable return on investment, with a 9% increase in retention rates, based on 1,000 apprentices.

According to one apprentice: “As an apprentice at Barchester, you are given an opportunity to develop a fulfilling career – it’s not just a job!”

For further information contact: terry.tucker@barchester.com
Care Management Services (CMS) is a private organisation that currently employs 25–30 people. Staff work in teams of six with a team leader. Each team supports one person, which helps staff to build up a relationship with the person they support.

CMS’s retention strategy involves providing each member of staff with a detailed induction training programme followed by regular appraisals and individual performance development plans. This enables staff to progress and develop personally and professionally, and is highly valued by the CMS staff.

CMS was not addressing a particular issue when they developed this retention strategy – it has always been part of their normal recruitment and retention policy. However, they have employed more motivated people recently which has placed a greater demand on the personal development that they offer.

It is part of the team leader’s role to help motivate the staff and this can be done in a number of ways depending on the individual, their interests and long term goals. Retention of team leaders themselves is helped by their performance-related bonuses, which encourage the development and retention of their team members.

This strategy is usually well received by all employees. The regular meetings support all staff and help them feel valued by their employer even if it doesn’t lead to career progression in homecare.

For further information contact: wee_h_y2k@yahoo.co.uk
Fast-tracking supervisors (Carewatch Ipswich)

**Issue:** Difficulty in recruiting motivated supervisors

**Solution:** Introducing a fast-track scheme for supervisors

Carewatch is a private home care service whose Ipswich branch currently employs around 100 people.

Carewatch Ipswich is trying to recruit motivated supervisors by employing two apprentices who will be fast-tracked to the supervisor role.

Carewatch has advertised in local newspapers, asking for individuals to apply for this scheme in writing rather than on the phone, as for the normal applications. It is hoped that this new application procedure will provide Carewatch with more genuinely interested and suitable applications. The company also hopes it will enable them to sort through unsuitable applicants before the interview stage.

Carewatch intends to recruit two motivated individuals to work initially as care workers for one year. It is hoped this will give candidates a good idea of what the business is about ‘from the grass roots up’.

The apprentices will also have the opportunity to work in the office and shadow some of the current supervisors. This will provide them with experience of both office and direct care work, which should help make them better supervisors. It is also hoped that this plan will deter people who cannot cope with home care and are not genuinely interested in the care sector from applying.

For further information contact: ipswich@carewatch.co.uk
Rainbow Care Services Limited (RCS) has approximately 45 employees and provides care in the community in Nottinghamshire.

The organisation found it was losing newly recruited staff before they even started, due to the length of time taken to get criminal records check. To overcome this, a work shadowing programme was introduced. When a POVA1st (or now a DBS Adult First Check) has been obtained, new recruits are able to work under the supervision of another member of staff while the full certificate is awaited.

Work shadowing involves a new recruit being paired with an experienced senior care worker, accompanying them working for a minimum period of one week, but usually up to three weeks. The programme forms part of the induction process, allowing new recruits to demonstrate what they have learned, as well as engaging them in setting objectives for their future learning and development.

Rainbow Care introduced work shadowing nearly two years ago and it has become an important aspect of the recruitment process. It also offers the opportunity for the senior staff member to observe the new worker’s communication skills and how they interact with people using the service.

Permission is always obtained from the person using the service beforehand, and they report valuing the time with the new recruits. Comments include:

“The best thing about the shadowing process is that [the new worker] gets to know my own routine and little ways and I get to know them. I like knowing who’s coming into my home.”

For further information contact: rainbowcare@hotmail.com
Meera House Nursing Home provides nursing and dementia care for 54 older people in London. The organisation currently employs 64 staff.

Meera House decided to introduce structured support and development through supervision in one of the home’s units in order to see what effect this would have on staff retention.

The supervision sessions are centred around staff members reflecting on their practice and what is working or not working. The sessions provide regular structured opportunities for staff to openly discuss their ideas and concerns with their manager.

Meera House has found that the introduction of structured supervision has changed staff attitudes. They feel more supported and willingly express their views without fear of criticism. Structured supervision has increased the confidence of the staff and has improved their performance as well as improved retention and teamwork in the unit.

Since introducing structured supervision, in one year only two staff members left the unit (and this was due to changes in their personal circumstances), compared with the previous three years’ annual average of four whole time equivalent posts becoming vacant.

In Meera House’s experience, valuing staff and demonstrating their contribution in the achievement of the overall objective of providing high quality of care to residents goes a long way towards retaining those staff. Support through formal supervision is one of the ways of showing how much the home values its staff.

For further information contact: manager@meeranursing.com
Sources of further information and advice for theme 3

Keeping up the good work – a practical guide to implementing continuing professional development in the adult social care workforce.

This Skills for Care guide provides clear information on the importance and practicalities of effective continuing professional development (CPD) for adult social care workers.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/cpd

Learning through Work (Skills for Care)

Skills for Care has published Learning through Work, a series of learning modules that develop communication and number skills in the adult social care workplace. They are designed to help supervisors deliver bite-size chunks of learning wherever natural learning opportunities arise as part of day to day care work.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/publications

CIPD factsheets

Topics include: performance management, learning and talent development, coaching and mentoring, inductions

www.cipd.co.uk

Common Induction Standards

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) state that all staff should receive a comprehensive induction that takes account of recognised standards within the sector and is relevant to their workplace and their role. The relevant induction in this context means the Common Induction Standards (CIS).

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/cis

Manager Induction Standards

The Manager Induction Standards set out clearly what a new manager needs to know and understand. They are aimed at those new to management as well as those new in post who have previously managed other care services. They are also intended for aspiring or potential managers to help support their development, although evidence of having met some of the standards will require actual management experience.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/mis

Information on applying for a DBS Adult First Check

https://www.isaadultfirst.co.uk/guidance.aspx
Care employers often note that it is difficult to retain care staff in highly responsible and demanding roles with low wages when similar levels of pay can be earned in less difficult jobs. While the adult social care workforce is sometimes associated with low salaries, research tells us that care staff often take the decision to change career or move from a care setting because of a feeling of not being valued by their employer, rather than low wage levels.

There are a number of actions that care employers can adopt to show that they value and respect their staff. The following case studies outline some inspiring ideas for such policies, including celebrating staff achievements and personal occasions, e.g. birthdays, organising award ceremonies (or more simply employee of the month), promoting a work/life balance and flexible working.

Once the excitement of being inducted in an organisation starts to fade, it is important that the employer recognises the importance of sustaining motivation.

It is also crucial to remember that recruiting the right people - people with tenacity and resolve – will mean they are more likely to stay on. So recruitment is an essential part of retention.
The Good Care Group mainly provides live-in care and employs over 200 care workers. They do not use agency staff and exclusively employ and train all their care staff.

Although live-in care workers are often temporary workers, the organisation was finding that despite its employment model, some employees were leaving within the first three months.

The recruitment team wanted to find out what separated their highest performing and longer-staying care workers from those who left. If they could make sure to recruit people with staying power then perhaps they could reduce the number of employees leaving.

They decided to use a psychometric test to understand what made their highest-performing care workers different from their more average performing care workers as well as those who were leaving the organisation. The results showed that their highest-performing care workers scored highly in areas of tenacity, resolve and self-discipline.

It was decided that these attributes would be specifically targeted in the recruitment process. Questions were designed to reveal those attributes, at both the telephone and face-to-face interview stages. If candidates pass these stages they are put forward for an induction programme which includes a selection day. The day’s exercises, tests and scenarios are designed to reveal care workers who are self-assured and resilient.

The Good Care Group has re-engineered its recruitment process to focus more on the key areas which it believes will improve both the quality and the tenacity of its new care workers.

For more information contact: dominique.kent@thegoodcaregroup.com
A personal touch  
(Helen McArdle Care)

**Issue:** Engaging and retaining staff  
**Solution:** Caring for staff with a personal touch

Helen McArdle Care is a family-owned business with over 20 years experience of providing residential and nursing care for older people throughout the North East of England. The organisation currently employs 800 staff.

As a family-run business, Helen McArdle Care prides itself on taking a personal touch with staff. The staff structure includes operations managers as well as care home managers, allowing management and staff to really get to know each other.

The ethos of Helen McArdle Care is to care for staff as individuals. If staff suffer hardship or personal problems the company writes to them to offer help. This is a discretionary policy and not formally written, but staff understand and know that they are supported by the management.

Helen McArdle Care celebrates annual ‘family fun’ days not only for all staff, but also their families, whose support for staff is greatly valued by the company. In these ways, staff know they are valued and respected and are more likely to stay with the company.

Helen McArdle Care also offers bonuses for loyalty and gaining qualifications.

The success of these policies is demonstrated by the fact that many staff (care workers as well as managers) have worked for Helen McArdle Care for 10–15 years. The fact that many staff have returned to work for the organisation after leaving to work for other companies also clearly demonstrates that a personal touch goes a long way.

**For further information contact:** lynneg@hmcgl.co.uk
Individual engagement
(Woodford Home Care)

**Issue:** Keeping individuals you value
**Solution:** Investing in and meeting the needs of individuals

Helen Wilcox, Managing Director at Woodford Home Care, says that developing your own staff creates the best workforce and in turn the best service that organisations can provide.

“I have a fantastic young man working for me called Jamie but for a period of time he was becoming stressed with his work and he felt it was time to move on. The starting point for me was to have an open and honest chat to try and find out what the problems were, because I felt any issues could be overcome between us.

Jamie had a disability which, at the time, needed more support than when he first came to us. Together we were able to agree the way forward based on the working relationship we’d already developed. We both adapted and Jamie felt more comfortable in his role. As a result it meant that I got to keep a really good worker and my service users didn’t lose a valuable member of the team.

This approach would apply to any member of my staff, not just those who have chosen to declare a disability. It’s about recognising your staff as individuals and if you get that right your staff will do a good job and tend to stay. I want to offer an excellent service to my service users and the only way that I can do this is by investing in the most valuable asset that my business has – the unique people that I employ.”

To find out more about recruitment visit: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment)
Swanborough House is a 31-bedded residential rehabilitation unit for adults with acquired brain injuries. It currently employs 46 staff.

It is essential that staff have a good standard of English in a setting where communication is vital. In order to support staff with language learning, Swanborough House offers free English classes which are run by a local community group.

The provision of the classes has resulted in a very loyal staff team who know that they are valued and that their career and personal development has been prioritised. Swanborough House has also found that many of the staff have gone on to do further training and achieve qualifications as a result of the English classes.

Swanborough House also ensures that staff work set shift patterns – three days on, three days off for residential and domiciliary care staff, and four days on, four days off for supported living staff. Set shift patterns mean that staff can better plan ahead for their free time and annual leave, and they also ensure consistency in care as each shift is worked by the same team with the same key workers.

The English classes and set shift patterns greatly encourage the retention of staff, and this loyalty is further reinforced by the positive risk-taking ethos of the care setting. This approach to care enables speedier rehabilitation of patients, and staff react very positively to working in an environment in which they can see the end results.

The value of these retention policies is demonstrated by the fact that Swanborough House has had no staff vacancies for 18 months. The home has also noted that provision of the English classes has resulted in less staff sickness because of increased motivation. In response to a survey of 11 staff who have attended English classes, 90% said that the classes had given them an incentive to stay at Swanborough House and 90% said it improved their confidence in caring for the client group.

For further information contact: swanboroughservices@raphaelmedicalcentre.co.uk
Sources of further information and advice for theme 4

CIPD factsheets – Employee Turnover and Retention
http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/employee-turnover-retention.aspx

Care Skillsbase
Care Skillsbase is a free web-based tool that helps social care employers manage Skills for Life in the workplace, helping to improve number and communication skills.
www.scie.org.uk/workforce/careskillsbase/index.asp

Health, work and well-being (Acas advisory booklet)
Work can have a positive impact on health and well-being. Healthy and well-motivated employees can have an equally positive impact on the productivity and effectiveness of a business. This booklet helps employers to understand the interaction between health and well-being and work by focusing on:
- the relationships between line managers and employees
- the importance of getting employees involved
- job design, flexible working and the use of occupational health.

Flexible working and work-life balance (Acas advisory booklet)
The hours and times people work have always been subject to change but the pace of this change is now more rapid than ever because:
- customers expect to have goods and services available outside traditional working hours
- organisations want to match their business needs with the way their employees work
- individuals want to achieve a better balance between work and home life.

This booklet provides information for employers and employees on how to manage flexible working and a work-life balance.
As part of the project, a short questionnaire was sent to adult social care employers in order to find out:

- what level of knowledge there is about recruitment and retention techniques in the sector
- what particular issues and barriers employers face in recruiting and retaining staff
- what examples of good practice can be shared to address recruitment and retention issues and barriers.

The questionnaire received a balanced response in terms of geographical spread, size of organisation, care setting and client group.

Responses to specific questions about recruitment and retention revealed that social care employers appear to adopt quite different strategies, and seek advice and information from varying sources, depending on their size.

Where do you normally access information and advice on recruitment and retention?

Many organisations look online for recruitment and retention advice and information.

Other popular sources of information and advice were the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), United Kingdom Homecare Association (UKHCA), Jobcentre Plus, Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service (ACAS), external recruitment-partner organisations, and internal information, statistics and HR staff.

What practical tools do you use in recruitment and retention and what further tools would be useful?

Many practical tools are in use across the responding organisations. For recruitment these include:

- employee referral schemes
- open days/tours
- ability testing
- input from people who use the service.

For retention they include:

- comprehensive inductions
- training, supervision
- empowerment
- flexible and family friendly policies
- benefit and reward schemes such as vouchers, healthcare, meals, bonuses and profit sharing.
Please tell us about a particular issue or barrier you experience in recruitment and/or retention.

The barriers to recruitment most often mentioned by respondents include being unable to attract candidates with the appropriate experience and/or commitment to the caring profession, low pay, and the somewhat negative image of the care sector and its career opportunities. Cost and time needed for recruitment were also seen as issues.

The criminal records check was mentioned as a major barrier to recruitment by respondents of all organisational sizes. The issue appears to be the length of time that the process can take, and difficulties in keeping recruits waiting for this time as they can often find other employment in the meantime.

Barriers to retention that were mentioned included the unsociable hours of the jobs, external pressures, e.g. the risk of litigation and monitoring by external agencies, pressure to complete qualifications, and employees not being sufficiently prepared for the demands of the job.
Section five
Further information and advice

**National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC)**
www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk

Skills for Care’s NMDS-SC gathers information about the adult social care workforce. Social care employers can use NMDS-SC to register and update information about their workers.

The benefits of registering with and updating NMDS-SC are:
- you will have the opportunity to access money for training
- you can access free e-learning on topics such as dementia and end of life care
- you can keep staff records in a free, secure, online resource, including information about their skills and qualifications
- the ability to anonymously compare your pay rates with other organisations.

The NMDS-SC is also used to influence government decisions on policy and funding.
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmds-sc

**CIPD factsheet on Workforce Planning**
www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/workforce-planning.aspx

**New 2013 Code of Conduct and National Minimum Training Standards for care workers**

The Code of Conduct describes the standards of conduct, behaviour and attitudes that the public and the people who need healthcare, care and support should expect of workers providing this care and support. The National Minimum Training Standards define the minimum knowledge workers must have, irrespective of individual job role.

Both the Code and the Standards were created after extensive consultation with employers and workers across both sectors to make sure they were fit for purpose.
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/codeofconductandtrainingstandards

**Rewards and incentives research: Attracting, retaining and developing staff in the adult social care sector in England (Skills for Care research briefing)**

Skills for Care commissioned research into the recruitment and retention of care staff in the social care sector in England. This research, which included case studies with both staff and managers, explored factors believed to ‘make a difference’ when trying to attract, retain and develop social care workers.
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/research
Social care sector research reports (Skills for Care)
Includes the latest State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England:
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/newresearchreports

Taking steps – a detailed guide to workforce planning for providers of adult social care (Skills for Care)
Skills for Care’s workforce planning guide is for all adult social care employers, whatever the size of their workforce, and is applicable across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/takingsteps

Workforce planning for personal assistants: Current issues, future challenges (Centre for Workforce Intelligence)
Appendix

This recruitment and retention toolkit project was originally managed by the English Community Care Association (ECCA) in 2010. The group met three times during the development of the toolkit and provided advice throughout the project phase.

In 2013 ECCA managed the update of this toolkit in collaboration with Skills for Care and members of the Care Providers Alliance:

- **UKHCA** – United Kingdom Home Care Association
- **NCF** – National Care Forum
- **VODG** – Voluntary Organisations Disability Group
- **ARC** – Association for Real Change

The following advisors provided suggestions and expertise for the 2013 update:

- **Dr Terry Tucker** – Barchester Healthcare
- **Dr Rekha Elaswarapu** – International Longevity Centre-UK
- **Richard Banks** – Independent Consultant
  - **Ann Mackay** – ECCA
  - **Michael Rumsby** – ECCA