Value based recruitment toolkit
Evaluation of 12 month pilot (July 2013/July 2014)

Executive summary

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The National Skills Academy for Adult Social Care, working in partnership with Skills for Care, MacIntyre Charity, and at the behest of the Department of Health, developed a value-based recruitment toolkit for adult social care. The toolkit was designed to help employers recruit people with the right social care values, who will stay with them to develop their careers in social care, adding value to their service. This report is a summary of the VBRT’s first 12 months of operation, the pilot year. The full evaluation report of the process and key findings can be found on the academy website under the Jobs/Recruitment tab or by visiting www.skillsforcare.org.uk/VBRTevaluation.

The toolkit is based on a model of values-based recruitment, which gives employers, especially smaller or micro employers who may be unfamiliar with the approach, an opportunity to use the different components in a way which best suits their individual needs to gauge the effect on their workforce and service.

Alongside the development of the toolkit, we undertook a 12 month evaluation project from July 2013. This evaluation period has now come to an end and we are taking recommendations from this evaluation to enhance the VBRT so the sector can continue to utilise this resource. The toolkit will remain available on the website for the sector to use.

The toolkit brings together a range of resources and guidance, which remain available to all free of charge on the NSA website. The toolkit includes:

- **The Leadership Qualities Framework for Adult Social Care**, which sets out what good behaviours look like at every level of the social care workforce.
- **Example job advertisements** that promote social care values and help you to prepare your own.
- **Online personality profiling questionnaire** and a resultant profile report to give a basic profile of a candidate’s value-base.

Please note that the PPQ was made freely available to those organisations who participated in the pilot. Now that the pilot has ended employers who wish to use the
PPQ will have to commission a provider to undertake this for them. There will be a matrix of assessment tools on the NSA website that will help organisations to choose the most suitable and cost effective system for their needs

- **Suggested interview questions** that enable candidates to demonstrate values in action. These will continue to be developed during 2014/2015.
- **Skills for Care’s Qualifications and Credits Framework** signposts the user to information and advice on what skills and qualifications to look for.
- **Finders Keepers** suggests a range of ways to improve your recruitment and retention.
- **A Question of Care: A Career for YOU?** Which provides a situational judgement test. This is not a substitute for personality profiling but is a useful addition to the toolkit and helps to inform the recruitment process.
- Links to other useful materials and websites.

The pilot phase evaluation activity has included a range of quantitative and qualitative research using primary and secondary data, following approval of research content and methodology by the Research Ethics Committee. Activity includes web analysis, employer engagement, employer surveys, research into alternative profiling systems and the production of case studies, with monthly and quarterly reports.

The pilot target was for 100 employers, with start up taking a phased approach. The type and size of employer ratio was determined by the makeup of the sector and participating employers signed up to the pilots ‘Terms of use’ before accessing the PPQ assessment tool. Each phase was listed at full capacity and a waiting list was generated in October 2013. By February 2014 the waiting list stood at 100 and this was sustained for the remainder of the pilot.

The toolkit is accessed via the NSA, Skills for Care and Profiles4Care websites and the stats were monitored throughout the pilot.
Key findings from pilot

There was substantial and sustained interest in the VBRT from day one of the launch with places allocated to 102 employers across all settings and sizes including residential, domiciliary, day care and individual employers/representatives, who all contributed to the following key findings:

- 7,213 profile reports generated for employers during the pilot period.
- 54,987 views of the NSA VBRT web page at the end of the pilot, of which 81.5% were unique views (first time visits to the site). Data from all three web-pages illustrate a sustained interest in VBRT.
- The value-based interview questions and example job adverts proved the most popular views throughout the pilot.
- Employer awareness into the components within the VBRT was initially low however proactive efforts to increase awareness were effective and later analysis indicated this situation had improved.
- There was a greater sense of awareness by employers on the waiting list. Of the full complement of VBRT, 85% used the value-based interview questions, 50% used the example job adverts and 25% used the Leadership Qualities Framework to inform a range of HR and practice related policies.
- On the whole, employers are recruiting to front-line workers (97%) and front-line supervisors (57%) and a smaller proportion of recruitment is to Operational Management (25%). There is active, but lower level, recruitment to senior management (8%) and self-directed support (16%)
- Employers are recognising that the PPQ, used on its own, does not provide sufficient assessment about the suitability of an applicant to inform recruitment decisions and that a range of assessment techniques, used collectively, provide a more robust recruitment process.
- Early signs of good practice are emerging, particularly where employers (68%) are reviewing their recruitment process to varying degrees and there is evidence that the PPQ is proving beneficial in a range of settings including induction, supervision, appraisal and staff development.
### Executive summary

- Interestingly, in a smaller number of cases, the VBRT is also being used to inform change in strategies and programmes, particularly in relation to developing and role-modelling value-based working throughout their business and organisational hierarchy with ‘values’ being identified as the ‘golden thread’.
- Key to successful implementation of the VBRT is senior management and partner buy-in/ownership from the outset.
- A significant number of pilot participants are purchasing the PPQ for their continued use beyond pilot despite the financial concerns previously raised.

### Next steps

The final survey identified a number of employers who are demonstrating good practice and these case studies are now available on the NSA and Skills for Care websites. It is also evident that employers want to continue to use the VBRT and have made a number of suggestions which include developing more components. We will be taking this forward during 2014/2015.

It is still too soon to say whether there is evidence of improved retention, improved behaviours or improved service provision. For most employers it is likely new employees, recruited using the VBRT, may only just be completing their probationary period or are still in the probation process. For this reason we will be conducting a longitudinal survey during 2014/2015. This would seek to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the VBRT on recruitment costs, staff retention, behaviours and service improvement.

Research into alternative psychometric profiling systems has been drawn to a conclusion. High level research was initially conducted to explore the wider systems market and a number of systems were selected for further analysis. Those that are considered ‘relevant to social care’, based on values representative to those defined by the NSA, have been included in a matrix of alternative psychometric systems and guidance which is available within the VBRT. We will continue to look for more examples for inclusion.
It would be fair to say that employers agree that the VBRT pilot has been very successful and that the VBRT, and separately the PPQ, add value to the recruitment process for social care employers. A significant number of pilot organisations have decided to continue with the PPQ beyond the pilot. This reflects how useful they have found the tool, not only with recruitment, but also retention and appraisal.

**A number of recommendations have been drawn from the report which includes suggestions provided by pilot organisations. These include:**

- To develop the VBRT by enhancing content.
- To broaden its resources and recruitment practice e.g. supervision, appraisal, performance management and staff development.
- To promote the awareness and take-up of the VBRT.
- To carry out a longitudinal study to evidence good practice.
- To consider suggestions for improvement put forward by participating employers and to promote and publish the evaluation findings for wider dissemination.
- Develop a road map: how to use tools along the recruitment journey.
- Develop a good practice application form for value-based recruiting.
- Develop guidance in the use of the PPQ.
- Develop guidance on the use of the VBRT and how it can inform a change programme.
- Identify benchmarking data/current position relating to recruitment and retention.
- Develop a financial modelling system.
- Develop guidance or a framework which supports a business case for the PPQ.
- Continue to develop and populate ‘guidance’ for the procurement of psychometric tests appropriate for social care.

The primary purpose of the assessment tool was to provide information for discussion at interview. During the pilot it was evident that it could be used in many other positive ways, with recruitment, retention, appraisals and training of staff at all levels. The outcome of the pilot evaluation has demonstrated a desire for this support within the sector.
We would like to thank all those involved in the pilot and the evaluation which will enable us to develop the VBRT further during 2014/2015.
To access the full report please go to www.skillsforcare.org.uk/VBRTevaluation