

Nina Osbourne, Training and Consultancy

Having open conversations to ensure PAs have the right values and behaviours

As an individual employer, Nina employs a team of personal assistants (PAs) to support her with her care needs.

Nina runs her own business and has a busy working and social life. The support Nina requires is quite specific and so she uses a values and behaviours-based approach to recruitment to ensure her PAs have the right values to complement her busy schedule.

What they do

Nina has four key values that she looks for in new PAs.

- A consideration to diversity
- Knowing when it is appropriate to step in and help
- Maintaining a balance between caring and supporting
- A willingness to learn

Nina is upfront and honest in discussing her style of working and what she expects from her PAs throughout the whole selection process. This ensures she recruits people with right values and behaviours for the role.

Job adverts include a combination of practical information candidates might need such as shift patterns, as well as the type of person they need to be.

Instead of a formal application form or interview, Nina will often ask candidates to 'come and have a chat' to learn more about each other. This allows Nina to build a rapport with the candidate to see how they get on with each other, the job and her dog. She says

She has an honest discussion about the role and her ways of working, using scenario based questions to assess whether someone has the right values and behaviours.

The questions explore the boundaries within the PA role, for example how and when to provide support when attending a business meeting with Nina, or undertaking domestic tasks around the home. She also addresses the issue of 'caring for the boss' to make sure candidates have the right values to cope with this.

Nina also finds that **A Question of Care: A career for you** is useful for entry level staff with little experience. This is a free, online scenario-based challenge that allows Nina to explore candidate's values whilst also informing them of the nature of the role and the wider sector.

What is the impact of using a values-based approach to recruitment

Nina says the main costs of using a values and behaviours-based approach to recruitment are linked primarily to her (valuable) time in planning and implementing not only the recruitment process, but also ongoing support as part of a learning environment.



A values based approach to recruitment and retention done well takes longer. If you are prepared to invest you will be rewarded.



Although Nina found this approach to take longer than traditional recruitment methods, she says it has definitely paid off in terms of finding the right people for her team.

This has resulted in a better level of care and support, her PAs staying in their roles longer and therefore less time spent on recruiting new workers.

Her PAs are required to learn a wide variety of skills and this means they must be willing to learn, as well as the need for a supportive learning environment from the individual employer. By ensuring both Nina and her PAs have the right values, this approach can maximise the benefits of the role and their professional relationship.



Staff who have values appreciate working in a values based environment.



Learn more

Skills for Care produces a wide range of products and services to support social care employers with their recruitment and retention challenges.

Finding and keeping workers

This online resource bank has lots of information to help employers find and keep workers for their organisation.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/finderskeepers

Values based recruitment toolkit

This online toolkit has lots of useful guidance and templates to help employers recruit workers with the right values, behaviours and attitudes.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/values

Think Care Careers

This website provides careers advice for people interested in working in social care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers
