

How to widen your pool of potential recruits- ten tips

As well as traditional ways of recruiting new people, these ten tips will help you to widen your pool of recruits.

Click on the tips below to find more information, including case studies and guidance.

1. [Review your workforce plans](#)
2. [Involve people who use services in your recruitment](#)
3. [Understand your local area and it's assets, make them work for you](#)
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1. Review your workforce plans

Don't automatically replace "like for like" and think about what you need now and what you may need in the future as your business develops.

Learn from others

One employer told us how they restructured their workforce to better meet the needs of people who need care and support. He said

"On reviewing our workforce plans we noticed our registered nurse was spending a lot of time on administrative duties. We decided to introduce a new role to support the nurse with this and promoted an existing office manager to take on parts of this role. We also decided to reorganise the current administration team to take on some of the duties that front line care workers did. This meant the registered nurse and care workers could spend more time with the individuals we support."

What you can do and how we can help

- **Register with [National Minimum Data Set for Social Care \(NMDS-SC\)](#)**
You can use the NMDS-SC to record information about your workers. You can use it to track training records, plan how many workers you need and use it to compare your business to other care providers.
- **Use the [Workforce readiness tool](#)**
To help you plan your workforce, this tool will help you reflect upon your current workforce, its' skills and knowledge.
- **Read [Practical approaches to workforce planning](#)**
This workbook takes you through the whole workforce planning process using a practical analyse-plan-do-review method.

2. Involve people who use your service, their families, friends and advocates in your recruitment drives

Not only are these the best people to ask about what they would want to see in future recruits, they can also be great advocates for great services!

Learn from others

One domiciliary care provider told us how they involved people who used their service in the recruitment process to help them find the right people. They said

“We wanted to make sure that the people using our services found care workers with the right values and behaviours. We trained our managers to work with new clients so that they could be involved in writing job adverts, job descriptions and person specifications for new workers. We also involve them in the interview and selection process.”

What you can do and how we can help?

- Our [Guidance how to involve people who need care and support in recruitment](#) can help.
- **Sign up to [I Care...Ambassadors](#)**
I Care...Ambassadors are people who work in social care that volunteer to talk about working in the sector. This could include talking to young people in schools, college leavers or unemployed workers. People who use services can support ambassadors to deliver activity.

3. Understand your local area and its assets – make them work for you!

There are lots of places in your local community where you might find new recruits. How could you benefit from developing this local knowledge and tap into potential talent?

Learn from others

To meet recruitment challenges in the area, Oxfordshire county council analysed population data and identified that the population aged 50+ is growing at an exponential rate, and are potentially a 'good fit' to work in the social care sector.

They ran a campaign to recruit older workers. They thought about the different opportunities in the local community and online, where older workers or retired people in Oxfordshire might see the adverts.

Their campaign included

- social media advertising targeting 45-65 year old females in Oxfordshire
- adverts on bus stops and phone boxes in key locations
- roadside billboard adverts
- printed adverts in Oxfordshire Families magazine.

They ensured the messages of their advertising were targeted to this age group. Read more about what they did [here](#), including examples of the adverts they used.

What you can do and how we can help you

▪ What's in your 'patch'?

Decide what your 'patch' looks like. For example, do staff travel to one central location (residential care) or to different locations (domiciliary care)? Do local transport links widen your potential 'patch'?

Find out what's available in your local area. Look closely at groups, organisations and facilities you might be able to find pools of applicants.

Here is our checklist of places you could search for.

Where?	Who to target?	Contacted
Army barracks	Army partners	
Schools and colleges	Parents	
Cafes and restaurants notice boards	Wider community	

Luncheon clubs and community groups	Older workers	
Community and voluntary groups	People who already volunteer	
Local leisure groups	Wider community	
Nurseries and playgroups	Parents	
Supermarkets	Wider community	
Libraries	Wider community	
Job Centre	Job seekers	

You'll often be able to find contact details on the internet. You could ask them to put up posters, promote vacancies on their social media accounts or website, offer to deliver a talk or presentation or host a coffee morning.

- Target demographic groups in a way they like to be communicated with. Read our [guide to help you communicate with specific demographic groups](#).
- Design recruitment activities tailored to each location, for example:
 - Hand out fliers at school gates to parents, inviting them for an informal chat over coffee/ group coffee morning. Clearly state on the flier any attractive parts of the role as appropriate (e.g. part time hours are welcome, happy to be flexible and work around your commitments).
 - Promote your vacancies at local community and voluntary groups via fliers and posters or by arranging a talk, explaining how rewarding care work can be.

4. Time your recruitment drives with local or national campaigns and activities.

Learn from others

Walnut Care in Lincoln needed to stand out from the crowd at their local careers fair. In 2015, it was the 800th anniversary of the 'Magna Carta' - Lincoln is the proud owner of a copy of Magna Carta and it was the city's theme for the year. They therefore decided to use this as a theme for their information stand.

They created a 'Magna Carta Cura' (great charter for care) listing the values and behaviours they were looking for in a care worker and asked people to sign up to the carta – even if people weren't interested in a job in care it got people involved and they took away mini-care carta fliers which they could share with their family and friends.

More than 2000 people signed the carta, and helped ensure the organisation were able to recruit sufficient staff to support a 25% growth in care hours.

You can read the full case study [here](#).

What you can do and how we can help you

- This could include local fairs, carnivals or jobs fairs. Also look out for national campaigns such as National Care Home Open Day, or Dementia Awareness Week. Look out for #hashtags and get involved on social media, hold an open day, or get involved in a community event.
- There are also key times in the calendar to target certain groups. Read our [guide to help you communicate with specific demographic groups](#).

5. Link up with local schools, colleges and universities – today's students, tomorrow's workforce

Learn from others

Partners in Care signed up to the *I Care...Ambassadors* initiative. They run a range of activities in local schools, colleges and universities to promote social care careers.

Their service coordinator says

“It offers the best opportunity to get your business name out there in the local community as somewhere people love to work.”

You can hear more from Partners in Care [here](#).

What you can do and how we can help you

- Sign up to [I Care...Ambassadors](#). *I Care...Ambassadors* are people who work in social care that volunteer to talk about working in the sector. This could include talking to young people in schools, college leavers or unemployed workers. It is a great way to build links with local schools, colleges, Jobcentre Plus and other community groups.
- Offer work experience or taster sessions to local school pupils and students.

6. Offer taster days or work experience

These are a great way of helping people to better understand the role before they sign a contract. It also allows you to see if people have the right values and behaviours before they come and work for you. Remember, skills and competencies can be developed once people start.

Learn from others

Future Carers ran a programme with their local Jobcentre Plus and Adult Skills & Community Learning (BMBC) to run the Future Carers Programme.

The programme offers individuals who are unemployed or working less than 16 hours per week, the opportunity to gain skills, knowledge and work experience in the social care sector. Local social care providers support this initiative by enabling participants to complete valuable work experience in their organisation.

Workforce Development Manager Trevor Hewitt said

“We are proud of the individual support we give to Future Carers during training and into employment. Now, more than 60% of students go into employment and 96% complete the programme of learning. It is very successful in achieving outcomes for people in Barnsley. We couldn't have achieved this without the support of social care employers.”

Speak to your local Jobcentre Plus about opportunities to offer work experience.

What you can do and how we can help you

- Get involved in [National Care Home Open Day](#)
- Open your doors and invite people in the local community to come along to events such as coffee mornings or a barn dance.
- Speak to your local [JobCentre Plus](#) to see how they can help. They may be running pre-employment courses and you could offer a work experience placement.

7. Make sure you're clear about the role and the type of person you want to hire

Don't make assumptions that potential new entrants understand the job adverts, roles or social care 'jargon'. Review your own materials – are your messages clear? Do they inspire action? Can you include any positive feedback from your existing workforce to encourage applicants?

Be clear that your application process is accessible and doesn't present any unnecessary obstacles.

Be open and innovative – think about **POTENTIAL** and not necessarily prior experience or qualifications. Many employers are now recruiting for raw talent, in other words, a person's values and behaviours, and they're reporting very positive results

Learn from others

One employer asked existing staff to refer a friend to boost their recruitment and also make staff think about their organisational values.

They asked their staff group to complete an exercise to strengthen their buy-in to the organisational values. This led to the question "who do you know with these values"?

Existing staff were asked to think about inviting people to a coffee morning to learn more about the sector and the job roles. People using care and support services were included in the development of the morning and were there to participate on the day.

Staff who introduced the "right kinds of people" who then went on to appointment, were rewarded with an incentive once that new recruit had served six months.

What you/we can do

- **Sign up to [I Care...Ambassadors](#)**
I Care...Ambassadors are people who work in social care that volunteer to talk about working in the sector. It gives you a great opportunity to dispel myths about social care and explain the different roles within your organisation.
- **[A Question of Care: A career for you](#)**
This online quiz guides people through social care scenarios and asks them questions to assess their suitability to work in the sector. At the end you get a report that matches their answers to the values needed to work in social care.

- **Don't use jargon and sector specific wording**

Using social care jargon, such as DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) or PHB (personal health budgets), might deter people from applying for your roles. Whilst you might want recruits with some experience and knowledge, think about the values, behaviours and skills that they need. Ask a critical friend who is unfamiliar with the social care sector to read through and provide constructive feedback.

We have example job adverts and person specifications to help you recruit people with the right values, behaviours and attitudes. Visit

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/valuesandbehaviours

8. Sell yourself

Remember there is always competition from other social care providers and other sectors. Think about what sets you apart from other employers and sell yourself – what makes you an employer of choice?

Learn from others

Walnut care told us about what they did at a local careers event to stand out from the crowd.

“You need to stand out from the other employers – think about who else will be there. At careers events we are competing against other employers and sectors, for example the Armed Forces bring a tank. It’s important to make yourself stand out, with something eye catching and interesting.

In 2016, we used the 100th birthday of Frank Sinatra as the theme for our stand. The operations manager is a member of a well-known local Big Band, and plays her saxophone at some recruitment events.

We make the stand interesting, with novel ways to collect contact details. Also think of ways for everyone at the event to get involved even if they weren’t interested in a job in care.”

Be bold – make it fun and interactive.

Read more from Walnut Care [here](#).

What you can do and how we can help

- **Visit [Finding and keeping workers](#)**
In the ‘Keep your people’ section there is lots of useful information and resources to help you keep your people. These will help you to think about what sets you apart from other employers.
- **Showcase the benefits you offer**
Remember it’s not just about the money, but about the overall package. Think about how to promote your offer.

Here are some things you might want to think about.

- Show your potential recruits that you care for their health and wellbeing.
- Explore low cost local or national reward schemes.
- Encourage staff discussions around what would enhance their working conditions or environment.

- **Use staff engagement and surveys**

Ask staff to feed back about their experience of working for you. Create case studies, blogs or articles and promote these in your local press or online. Stories like these usually make great content for social media and can boost the news or blog pages of your website.

There are lots of case studies on our [Think Care Careers](#) website. You could use these as a guide to create your own.

Develop a staff forum to support open communications – these can be a great way to evaluate what's happening.

9. Start a volunteering scheme

A lot of volunteers can often go on to apply for job roles, which is great because they already have first-hand experience of your organisational culture, how you operate and have decided it fits in well with what they look for in an employer.

Learn from others

National care provider, Anchor, run a volunteering scheme across their care homes. They invite anyone over the age of 16 to apply to become a volunteer, in a range of roles.

Volunteers can do lots of different things including one to one interaction, organising social activities, offering companionship and supporting someone to get out and about.

Their website makes it clear that they look for people with the right values who are friendly, approachable and have good people skills.

What you can do and how we can help

- **[Volunteering in care homes](#)**
We have lots of resources to help you start a volunteering scheme within your service, including an induction presentation, induction workbook, certificate and feedback sheet.

10. Review the diversity of your workforce

Ideally, your workforce should reflect the community it serves. This means thinking about demographics such as age, gender, religion and ethnicity.

Learn from others

One employer told us how they targeted specific demographic groups to recruit a more diverse workforce. They said

“On reviewing our workforce profile, we found that the average age of our workforce was 54 years old, and that the percentage of male workers was under 2%. We were aware that the people we supported were 64% male, and so took this into consideration in our next recruitment campaign. We made sure our adverts were inclusive to appeal to male and younger workers, to encourage them to apply alongside other interested recruits.”

What you can do and how we can help

- Understand your market and client group.
 - Think about the demand in your area.
 - Keep up to date with changes in policy and legislation that might impact upon what services you deliver and how you deliver them.
 - Become involved in local planning groups and networks.
- **Use data from your [NMDS-SC](#) account**
Think about gaps in your workforce profile – including age, gender and ethnicity. You can also use the data to measure how you compare against other employers offering the same services.
- **[Guidance on avoiding prejudice and discrimination](#)**
Be aware of appropriate legislation relating to discrimination and fair recruitment process.
- **Understand how to [communicate with specific demographic groups](#)**
Our guide gives you practical tips to help you target specific demographic groups including young people, older workers and migrant workers. It includes the best channels to communicate, including social media, and the key messages you should give each group when recruiting.
- **[Guidance for managers of older workers](#)**
This toolkit will help you recruit, plan work for and manage older workers.

Case study: [Read](#) how Oxfordshire County Council recruited older workers through a social media and advertising campaign.

- **[Guidance on the recruitment and retention of disabled workers in adult social care](#)**

This guide will help you recruit and retain disabled workers. It includes case studies from social care employers about their approach to recruiting people with disabilities.

- **Recognise the potential in workers rather than their background**

The #seepotential campaign encourages employers to recognise the potential within people regardless of their background, including people who have a criminal record, are recovering from addiction and who are homeless.

Find more information here www.gov.uk/seepotential