

Involving people who need care and support in recruitment and retention

This guide helps social care employers include the people they support in the recruitment and retention process.

It is split into four easy to read sections, with practical tips and case studies to help.

*Parts of this guide have been adapted from 'How to involve people who use services and carers in staff recruitment and development: a practical guide for employers', Skills for Care (2008).

Why should you involve people who need care and support in your recruitment and retention?

Where people who need care and support are actively involved in recruitment and retention, they can

- exert greater control and influence over who will support them, resulting in better outcomes
- provide a first-hand experience of what is needed from new recruits
- judge how well a candidate engages and communicates with them
- tell candidates what's important to them, and identify if they have the right values, behaviours and attitudes for the role.

You might also like to include families and carers in the process.

By finding the right people initially who perform well and are more likely to stay, this can improve the quality of care for individuals, save recruitment costs and time and improve staff retention.

Employers told us:

“People who need care and support and their carers can test out the values behaviours, attitudes and interpersonal skills of job applicants.”

Job specifications can be tailored to reflect the needs and interests of people who need care and support.



How can people who need care and support be involved in recruitment and retention?

There are four main areas people who need care and support can be involved with. Click on the headings below to find practical tips and case studies to help.

Before you get started

It's important you prepare properly to involve people who need care and support in your recruitment and retention.

1. Recruitment

People who need care and support can help you to:

- identify the type of person they'd like to support them
- support the development of job descriptions, person specifications, promotional adverts and recruitment information packs.

2. Selection

People who need care and support can help you to:

- shortlist candidates
- contribute to face to face interviews, visits or presentations
- provide valuable feedback to those who were not successful.

3. Induction and training

People who need care and support can:

- be involved in induction, learning and development.

4. Feedback about performance

People who need care and support can:

- provide feedback throughout probationary period and ongoing appraisals
- be involved in exit interviews for staff who leave.

Before you get started ...

It's important you prepare properly to involve people who need care and support in your recruitment and retention. Here are some tips to help you get started.

1. Make sure your organisation has a positive workplace culture and ethos

It's crucial that managers and staff are committed to the idea of involving people and making it happen. A positive workplace culture will support this.

Our [culture toolkit](#) can help you with this.

2. Consider individuals' access and personal support needs

Make sure all the necessary practical arrangements are put in place to enable people who need care and support, their families and carers, to get involved. Here are some things you might need to consider.

Checklist	Tick
Is the venue accessible?	
Is the venue on a major transport link for buses and trains?	
Does the person who needs care and support need help to arrange transport?	
Does the venue have a hearing loop system if required?	
Do you need to accommodate assistive technology?	
Is the time convenient for the individual? It may not be practical for some people to come too early or late in the day.	
Do you need to provide any personal support?	
Will a personal carer or assistant also be coming?	
Will you need to provide lunch and refreshments? If so, are there any dietary requirements?	
Do you need to schedule regular breaks?	

3. Provide training where necessary

Some people may want to get involved but feel they don't have the right skills; training might therefore be necessary. Or they may need structured and planned support to contribute in a meaningful way. Everyone should be properly briefed and have the right knowledge about key recruitment policies.

Here are some areas where people might need training.

- Confidentiality
- Equal opportunities
- Public speaking
- Interviewing techniques

4. Be clear and honest about how much influence people have

It's important to establish the boundaries to involvement to avoid disappointment or disagreements later on in the process.

Decide how much weight the views of people who need care and support will have in recruiting new workers. If, for example, managers make the final decision but the views of people who need care and support are taken into account, everyone needs to be clear about this at the outset.

5. Ensure compliance with employment legislation

Make sure your recruitment and selection process is fair and consistent, and complies with relevant legislation such as equality and diversity. You need to make sure people who need care and support understand what this will mean in practice. Here are some examples.

- Every candidate must be treated in the same way. This means asking them the same questions and using the same system to score their responses.
- Each candidate must be assessed against the assessment criteria, not against each other.
- It's important to avoid personal questions such as 'are you married?'

6. Value people's contribution

Thank people for their contribution. This could include a reward for people for their involvement or covering expenses such as travel or lunch. It's important to agree how much and when they'll be paid before, and ensure you pay them promptly.

7. Ask for feedback about the process

Asking people how they found the process will show that you value their involvement and also help you to improve and develop your recruitment and retention practices. For example if someone interviewed a potential candidate, you could ask them 'did you enjoy asking questions?', 'did you feel well prepared and supported to take part?', and 'did you feel you made a difference?'

Involving people who need care and support in recruitment and retention

1. Recruitment

People who need care and support can help you to

Identify the type of person they'd like to support them

- Find out from people what they want from staff who support them. This should include their values, behaviours and attitudes, as well as the practical tasks new recruits might need to do.
- This could be done through resident or carer meetings or forums, surveys and questionnaires, speaking to people individually. See [appendix 1](#) for a template you could use to collect this information.
- Be realistic and honest. People might give a specific description of the person they'd like to support them; however they may need to compromise due to the variety of candidates that apply or employment and discrimination law.
- Make a video with people saying what is important to them and what they want from staff, to be used at recruitment events.
- Gather information from the person's circle of support, friends, family and carers about what's important to them.
- Use existing members of staff as a conversation starter. For example, someone might say 'I want someone like David.' This could lead to a conversation about what makes David good at his job.

Support the development of job descriptions, person specification, promotional adverts and recruitment information packs.

- Adverts could feature people who need care and support with powerful statements about what's important to them such as 'I want someone who is caring and treats me with respect.'
- Ask people who use your services what they think should be included in recruitment information and packs for potential job applicants.



 Job applicants get a clearer picture about what the job entails.

2. Selection

People who need care and support can help you to ...

Shortlist candidates

- Ask people who use care and support what they think of applications by getting them involved in short-listing. (If there are a large number of applicants, the manager could carry out the initial short-listing to make it more manageable). Think about other requirements such as large print copies of application forms.

Contribute to face to face interviews, visits or presentations

- They could
 - write some questions that the interview panel will ask
 - meet with potential candidates and ask them questions they've prepared in advance, or talk informally
 - hold a separate interview panel alongside the management panel, or be on the same interview panel as managers
 - watch candidate's presentations, where applicable, and provide feedback. Candidates could be asked to present to a panel of people who need care and support, their families and carers.
 - meet candidates before an interview; they could have a cup of tea together or include candidates in an activity.
- You could record the interview so that people can reflect on each candidate afterwards.
- Think about the support people might need to be involved. They might need a practice interview to read through the questions beforehand.
- Think about a simple score sheet to provide feedback. This could be marks out of 5 against simple criteria, or pictures of happy, neutral and sad faces linked to a scale of 1,2 and 3. See [appendix 2](#) for an example feedback form used by Aldingbourne Trust.
- People might also want to write pre-defined questions. For example candidates are asked 'How can you support me if I was upset?' and they would tick if a candidate answers 'Talk it through, be calm and understanding and give me some space.'

Tell successful candidates they have the job

- This could be done by letter or phone.
- People who need care and support could write successful candidates a letter that welcomes them to the post. Or they could be involved in developing the constructive feedback for candidates that have not been successful.
- Remember, if someone phones a candidate to tell them they have the job, this constitutes a verbal offer of a contract.

3. Induction and training

People who need care and support can help you to ...

Support staff with induction and ongoing training and support

- Show round new staff and talk to them about the way they'd like them to work. Experienced staff can support people to do this.
- Contribute to induction or training sessions, tell participants what they want from staff and answer questions.
- Include people who need care and support in deciding what training staff need. For example if someone feels that staff don't communicate with them in a way they prefer, this could influence the ongoing training offered to staff. They could also be part of the training delivery.
- Show new workers a video of people talking about what they want from the people who support them.
- Feedback about how staff are using training in practice. For example, if staff have just done moving and handling training, you could ask people if staff are explaining the manoeuvre before doing it, or if they're using the correct equipment.



4. Feedback about performance

People who need care and support can help you to ...

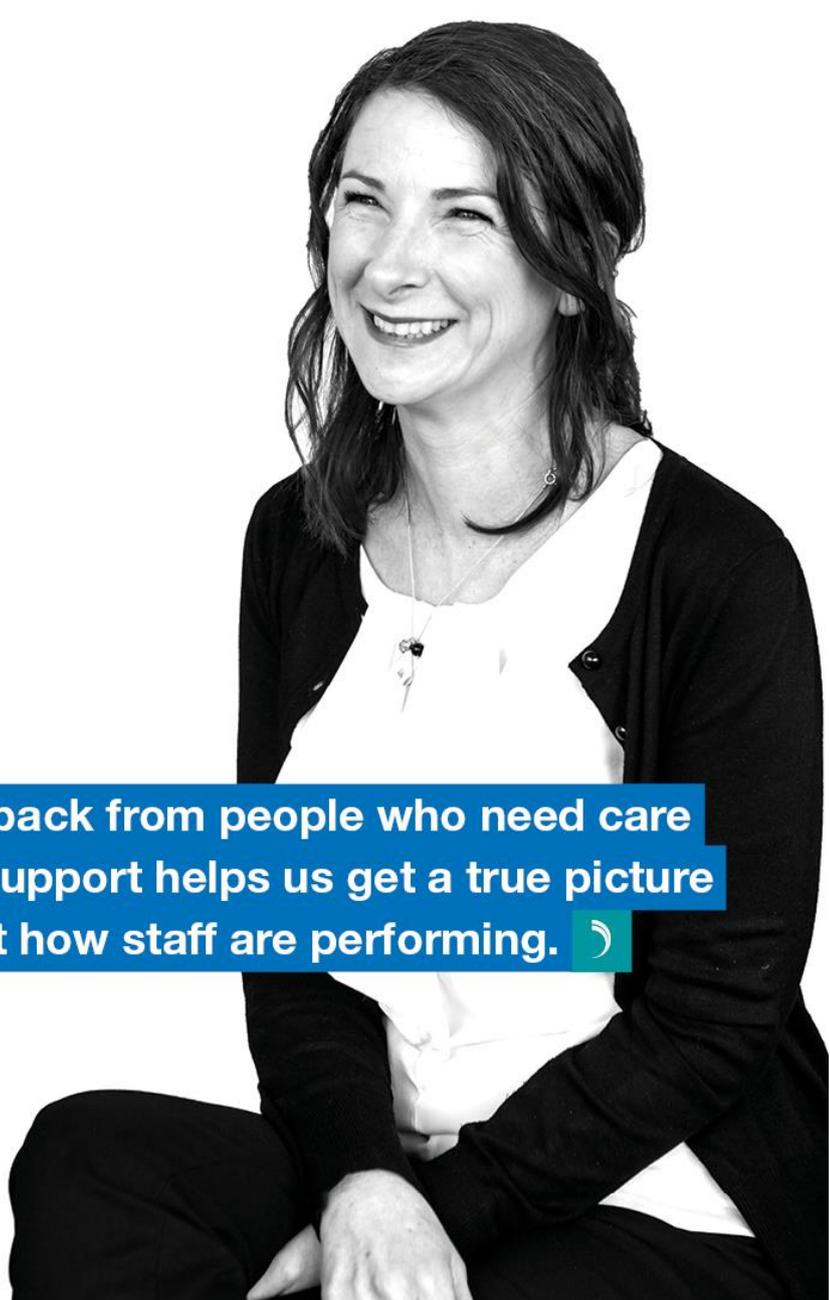
Provide feedback throughout probationary period and for ongoing appraisals

- Feedback could be collected about staff through
 - questionnaires and surveys
 - face to face feedback
 - meetings and carer networks
 - observation of interaction between staff and people who need care and support.

[Appendix 2](#) could help you with this.

Be involved in exit interviews for staff who leave

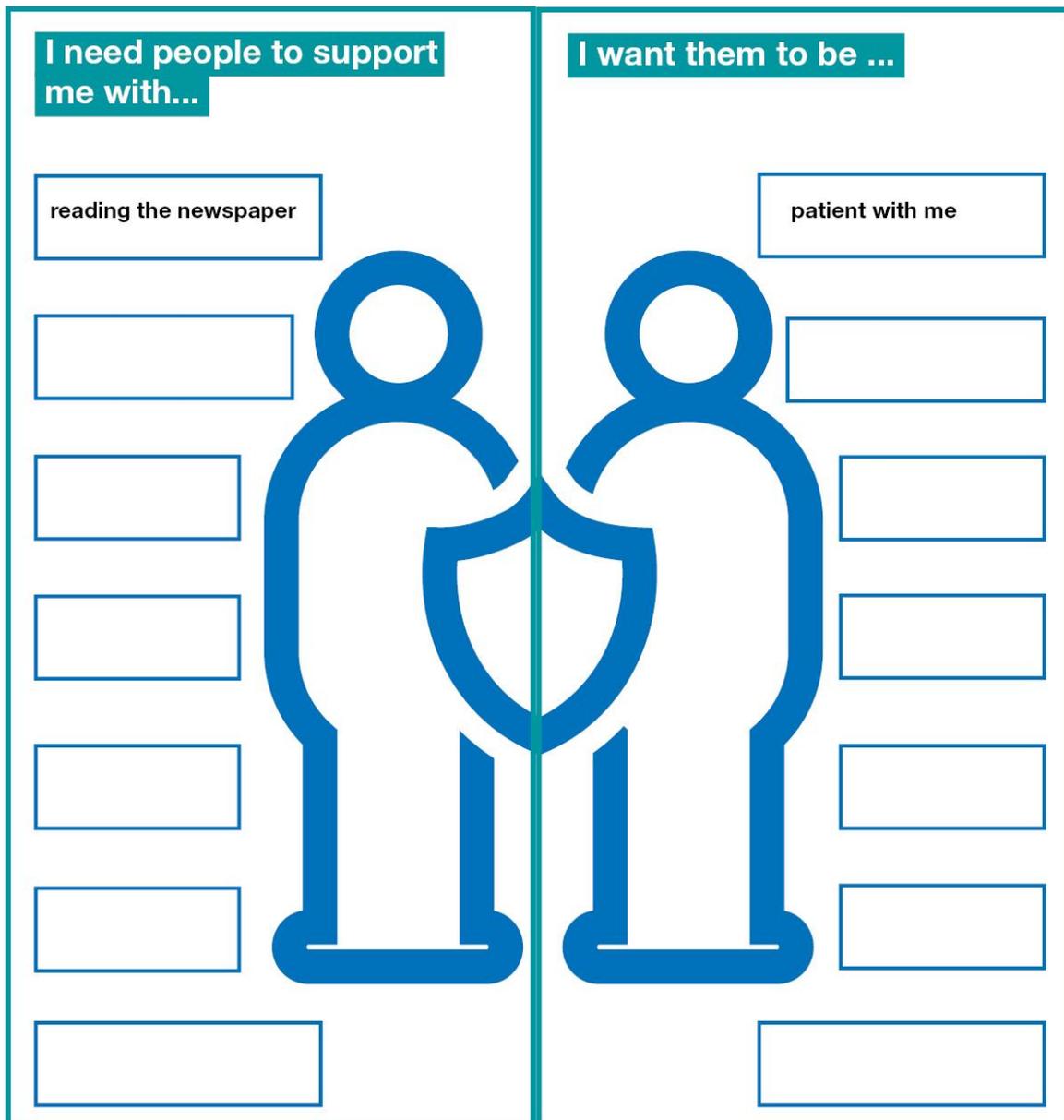
- Ask people who need care and support what they will miss about the person who's leaving. You could also ask them what they want the new person to be like in terms of their values, behaviours and attitudes.



Feedback from people who need care and support helps us get a true picture about how staff are performing.

Appendix 1: What do I want from the people who support me?

I need people to support me with...	I want them to be ...
reading the newspaper	patient with me



Appendix 2: Example feedback form used by Aldingbourne Trust

**SUPPORT STAFF
END OF PROBATION
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS**

Attach staff photo

Have your say!!!

1. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING SUPPORTED BY THIS MEMBER OF STAFF?



2. WHAT ACTIVITIES OR OUTINGS HAVE THEY HELPED YOU PLAN?



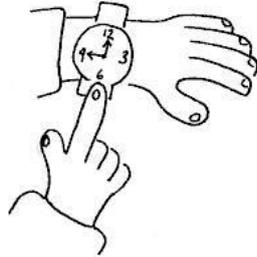
3. DO THEY LISTEN TO WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?



4. DO THEY KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR BEFORE ENTERING?



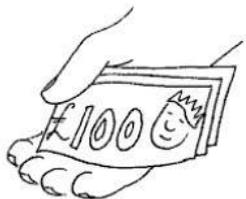
5. DO THEY TURN UP ON TIME TO SUPPORT YOU?



6. HOW DO THEY SUPPORT YOU WITH YOUR COOKING?



7. DO THEY HELP YOU SORT OUT YOUR MONEY?



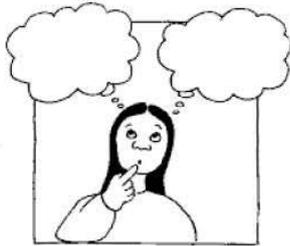
8. IS THERE ANYTHING THEY DO WHEN SUPPORTING YOU IN YOUR HOME THAT YOU ARE NOT HAPPY ABOUT? FOR EXAMPLE, DO THEY HELP THEMSELVES TO YOUR FOOD, USE YOUR TELEPHONE OR YOUR TOILET WITHOUT ASKING?



9. HAVE THEY EVER USED THEIR MOBILE PHONE FOR PERSONAL CALLS WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING YOU?



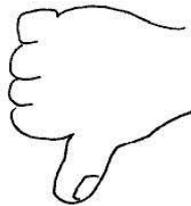
10. IF THIS HAS HAPPENED – HAVE THEY ASKED YOU IF IT IS OK AND HOW MANY TIMES HAS IT HAPPENED?



11. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE WAY THIS PERSON SUPPORTS YOU?



12. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DON'T LIKE ABOUT THE WAY THIS PERSON SUPPORTS YOU?



Name of Tenant:

Name of Staff Member asking these questions:

Date: