

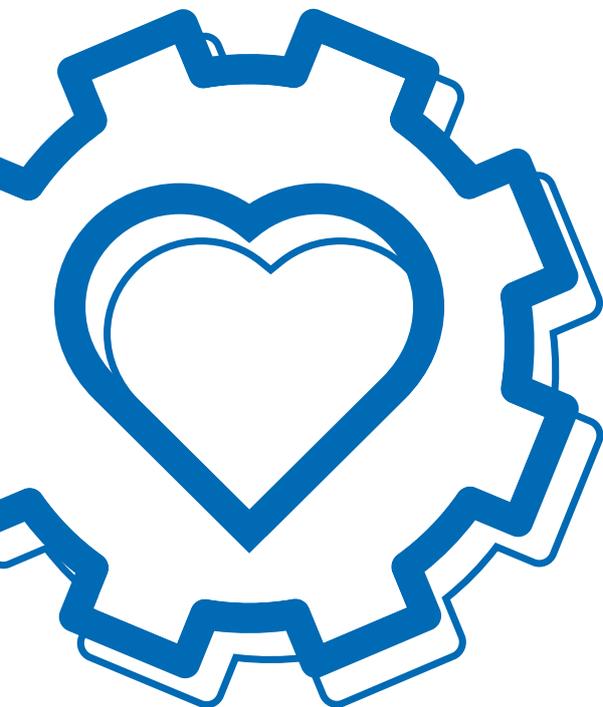
Workforce



The workforce element focuses on supporting people to build confidence, develop skills and progress into meaningful, sustainable employment. This section showcases how personalised guidance, high quality training, employer informed preparation and strong relationships combine to create clear pathways into work and strengthen the local care workforce.

“A lot of the people we get may have been unemployed for a long period of time, or they might have just taken time out to care for family. Everyone comes from quite diverse backgrounds – some have only been in the country a short time but have previous experience of care, while others have been out of work and are using this as a stepping stone.”

Marie Carney, Tutor, Care Academy, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council



Supporting individuals to find work

“If I’m at a food bank with Hub on Tour, I’m discreet. I’ll sit there and wait for people to come to me. The last thing they need is someone telling them they should be doing something. It works because there’s no pressure – people come because they want support.”

Michael Elliott, Recruitment Co-ordinator, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

The Hub and Hub on Tour provide personalised, barrier aware support that helps people build confidence, understand opportunities and progress into roles that suit their circumstances and aspirations.

- **Tailored guidance** – support is adapted to people’s confidence, experience, communication needs and personal circumstances.
- **Realistic insight into roles** – residents gain a clear understanding of workplace expectations, routines and the emotional demands of care roles.
- **Supportive small-group learning** – structured teaching, clear routines and consistent encouragement build confidence and help people adjust to work-like environments.
- **Flexible re-entry options** – individuals can return to future cohorts if they need more preparation before progressing.
- **Better-off calculations** – early financial comparisons help people understand how work will affect their income and benefits.
- **Progression support** – events, masterclasses and further training opportunities encourage long-term growth and career development.

Supporting providers to find candidates

The Hub works closely with providers to understand their workforce needs and supply candidates who are motivated, informed and well prepared.

- **Prepared candidates with recent training** – employers meet applicants who have recently completed structured preparation and understand sector expectations.
- **Skills-matrix screening** – matching candidates by key criteria such as driving, personal care readiness or familiarity with specific needs improves recruitment outcomes.
- **Fast communication** – timely updates and informal contact prevent delays and keep recruitment moving.
- **Support for workplace familiarisation** – phased starts or accompanied visits help reduce anxiety and increase retention.

Developing the skills needed for adult social care

“The Care Academy works with candidates so they’ll really understand the employers who’ll be interviewing them – what a day in the life looks like, what the team is like and the tasks and responsibilities they’d have. When they’ve had that preparation, they know what to expect. It makes that first day far less stressful and gives them a much better chance of staying in the role.”

Sophie Proud, Recruitment Co-ordinator, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Through strong links to the Care Academy and other learning provision, the Hub supports learners to develop the knowledge, behaviours and personal qualities needed to thrive in adult social care roles.

- **Delivering structured, sector specific learning** – the Care Academy covers essential care knowledge, safeguarding, communication, boundaries, resilience and understanding of vulnerable adults.
- **Embedding employer-informed content** – feedback on topics such as Positive Behavioural Support models, learning disabilities, dementia and personal care leads to curriculum updates.
- **Helping learners understand progression pathways** – tutors highlight routes into nursing, therapies, senior care roles and further qualifications, shaping long-term aspirations.
- **Fostering personal readiness and resilience** – activities build self-belief and equip learners for the emotional and practical demands of frontline care work.
- **Allow re-entry to future cohorts** – learners who are not ready or successful at first can return, improving confidence, competence and long-term outcomes.

“As a teacher, I look at each individual and what support they need, and try to put that into place throughout the course. We take quite a holistic approach because everybody’s situation is different, and my role is to make sure they’re able to develop, gain confidence and move towards employment at the end of it.”

Marie Carney, Tutor, Care Academy, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Interviews and onboarding opportunities

The Hub creates direct, meaningful connections between candidates and employers, ensuring smooth transitions into work.

- **Offering guaranteed interviews for programme completers** – every learner completing the Care Academy receives an interview opportunity with one or more employers.
- **Allowing for different interview formats** – providers can use short initial chats, longer structured interviews or staged follow-ups depending on their process.
- **Increase onboarding engagement** – Care Academy graduates maintain close contact with employers during checks and onboarding, responding faster than typical online applicants.

“Face-to-face recruitment is a massive bonus. It gives you a far clearer sense of someone than just reading a CV. Job fairs at the Hub really deliver. The last one I attended brought in about 300 people in a single day.”

Ged Devine, Operations Manager, Milewood, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Supporting care-experienced young people into care work

“Lived experience often points naturally toward care roles. Our job is to translate that into skills, qualifications and supported starts, then stay with them through induction, elearning and first month routines so early worries don’t become exits.”

Craig Dring, Recruitment Co-ordinator, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

- **Dedicated point of support** – a specialist co-ordinator provides a consistent presence in the No Limits Hub, a drop-in space where care leavers can relax, meet with workers, and access advice, guidance, activities, and practical support.
- **Gradual, relationship-based engagement** – support begins with small, manageable steps such as home visits, informal conversations or confidence-building activities for young people not ready to attend the Hub.
- **Career planning rooted in lived experience** – staff help young people explore suitable roles in children’s, young people’s or adult care settings by drawing on their strengths, interests and personal experiences.
- **Early removal of practical barriers** – support includes help with digital access, benefits and better-off calculations, ID and documentation, clothing for interviews and English support where needed.
- **Exposure to care environments** – opportunities such as paid work placements, volunteering, introductory training or employer visits help young people build confidence and understand roles before committing.
- **Ongoing support after job entry** – staff stay in touch through induction, early routines, communication with employers and help with practical or personal challenges to sustain engagement in work.

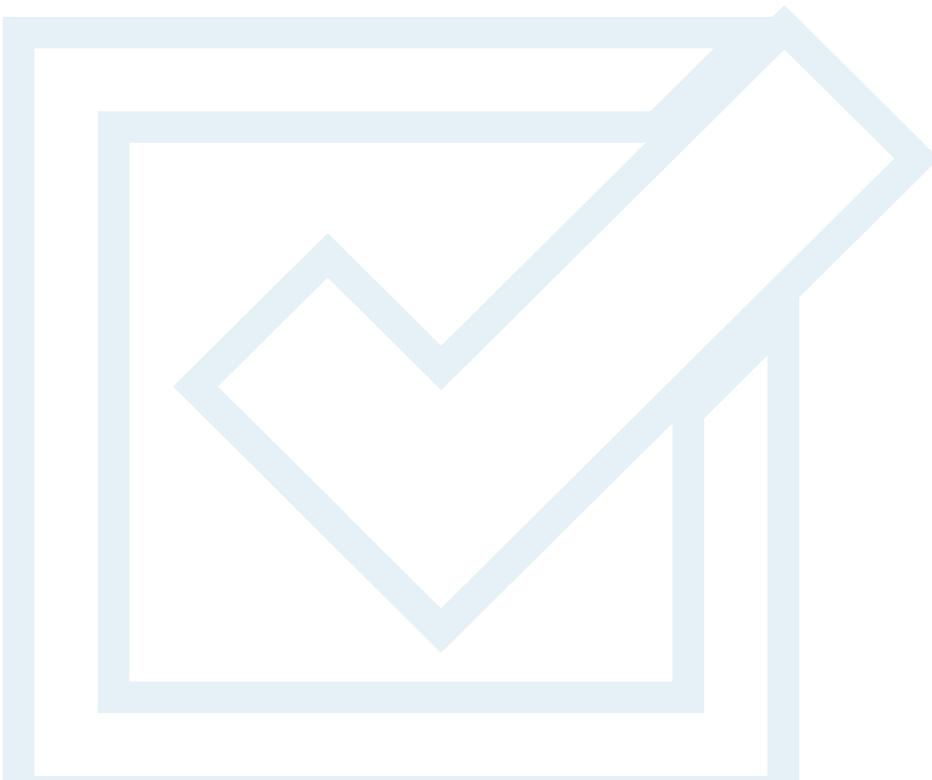


Key decisions

- The Hub creates direct, meaningful connections between candidates and employers, ensuring smooth transitions into work.
- Creating a seamless environment for onboarding enables employers to use Hub rooms for follow-up interviews, ID checks or induction preparation, smoothing the transition into work.

“Employers recruit from the Care Academy because it offers something unique. It’s free for them, and on interview day the candidates are all there in one place, with recent and up-to-date training, ready and waiting to go.”

Marie Carney, Tutor, Care Academy, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council





Key learning

Learning from delivery has helped refine how the Hub builds a strong, sustainable care workforce.

- **A supportive environment unlocks potential** – a calm, welcoming Hub helps candidates bring their best selves to interviews and onboarding, improving outcomes for individuals and employers alike.
- **Align outreach timing with community rhythms** – sessions are scheduled around school runs, foodbank collection times and other high footfall moments to ensure higher engagement.
- **Clear, consistent preparation leads to better retention** – candidates who understand the reality of care work before starting are far more likely to stay and progress.
- **Employers value candidates who actively choose the sector** – voluntary participation, rather than mandated attendance, results in more motivated applicants.
- **Feedback loops must remain constant** – curriculum tweaks, matching improvements and employer-informed adjustments ensure the programme stays relevant and of high quality.
- **Personalised support is essential for success** – confidence, anxiety and life circumstances matter as much as technical skills in preparing people for frontline roles.
- **Improve retention through local matching** – placing people in services close to home reduces travel barriers and encourages long-term commitment.

“We take people we support to job fairs so they can meet applicants and ask questions about what it’s like living in a care home and what they look for in staff. One person especially loves attending – talking to people, handing out forms and getting names written down. Our clients enjoy meeting new people, and it gives applicants the chance to meet the client group before applying and see if the role is right for them.”

Ged Devine, Operations Manager, Milewood, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council