

Practical approach toolkit: Retaining the next generation overview

Who is the toolkit for?

It's for

- adult social care providers
- partners such as apprenticeship providers, virtual schools and local authorities.

It supports organisations looking for practical, inclusive ways to recruit and retain young people, including those who are care experienced or face additional barriers to employment.

What the toolkit offers

The toolkit summarises St Monica Trust's experience of supporting young people into social care roles through age responsive recruitment, induction and apprenticeship pathways. It provides:

- a clear overview of the challenges and opportunities when employing younger workers
- insight into the trust's apprenticeship model and the support structures surrounding it
- eight building blocks explaining how to get started, each with practical recommendations
- learning from what worked, what needed adapting and how the approach evolved over time.

Why this approach matters

With ongoing vacancies, high turnover and an ageing workforce, providers need new ways to develop a sustainable talent pipeline. Many young people—particularly those who are care experienced—face barriers that make entering and remaining in work more difficult, and conventional apprenticeships often don't meet their needs. St Monica Trust's approach builds workforce resilience while creating opportunities for young people to grow skills, confidence and long term career prospects.

Key features include:

- **Values-based recruitment:** Focused on motivation, potential and alignment with care-sector values.
- **Supportive starts:** Supernumerary shifts and structured induction help ease the transition into work.
- **Trauma-informed support:** Personalised guidance, mentoring and peer networks to build confidence and stability.

- **Flexible learning:** Accessible formats and digital tools to help young people engage with training at a manageable pace.
- **Clear progression routes:** Defined pathways that help young people see future opportunities and sustained roles in the sector.

Overarching lessons

- Recruit for values and support workplace readiness through clear expectations and structured early guidance.
- Embed support throughout the programme. Consistent relationships and pastoral care are critical.
- Treat apprenticeships as long-term workforce investment to strengthen stability and reduce agency reliance.
- Iterate and refine. Small adjustments, such as staggered starts or updated mentoring, can significantly improve outcomes.

Key takeaways

- Age-responsive support improves retention, confidence and overall team culture.
- Young people bring energy, connection and long-term potential when well supported.
- Embedding apprenticeships within workforce planning helps build stability and reduces reliance on agency staff.
- Whole-organisation commitment is essential for success.
- The approach is flexible and can be adapted to organisations of any size.

You can find the full toolkit including the building blocks that shaped the approach and practical recommendations to help you adapt the model, alongside a recorded presentation on [our website](#). Together, they will support you to develop inclusive, age responsive apprenticeship pathways and build a more sustainable workforce.