



## The care exchange - Series 4 Episode 1: What is your favourite chocolate bar?: Neil Eastwood, CEO and founder of Care Friends

**Hosts:** Pia Rathje-Burton and Wendy Adams

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 00:08

Welcome to the care exchange Skills for Care podcast for managers in social care. I'm Pia Rathje-Burton.

**Wendy Adams** 00:14

And I'm Wendy Adams.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 00:16

Today we are launching series four of the care exchange and we have Neil Eastwood as a guest on this live episode of the podcast. So Neil is an international speaker on recruitment and retention of frontline staff in social care. If you have been to any kind of social care conference in the last few years, you have most likely seen Neil talk about recruitment and retention.

**Wendy Adams** 00:40

Neil is also the author of the best selling book 'Saving social care' that was published in 2017. Neil has very recently published the second edition, 'Saving social care'. Neil is also the founder and CEO of Care Friends, the employee referral app for social care in partnership with Skills for Care. Earlier this year Care Friends won the 2023 Kings award for innovation for the Care Friends app. This is to recognise commercial success. And it's one of the UK's most prestigious business awards.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 01:16

And today is a special episode of the care exchange. We have a live audience listening to our conversation. So thank you to everybody who have joined us live.

**Wendy Adams** 01:25

If you've joined us live, you'll know that we asked you if you had any questions for our guest. Thank you for all of your suggestions. And we will be incorporating those into our conversation today,

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 01:36

So, on with the show.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 01:45**

So welcome Neil to the care exchange

**Neil Eastwood 01:48**

Thank you. Yeah, delighted to be here. Thanks for inviting me. And yeah, I'm dialling in from Waterloo, the London one not the Belgian one.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 01:58**

So we had the introductions that you're very recently published the second edition of the saving social care book. Why have you published a second edition?

**Neil Eastwood 02:08**

Well, yeah, that's a good question. I think first of all, maybe I should clarify what a second edition actually means. Because it's not a new book. And interestingly, like writing a book you learn, there's a lot of rules that you didn't know about books and writing them. And interestingly, a second edition means that you have to have between 15 and 30%, new content. So below 15. People complain, why have I bought this again, and over 30, it's a different book. So I think that's the first. The first thing to say, I actually found writing the book really, really difficult the the 2017 one, it was a bit easier this time around. And, you know, I wondered what why would I go through all of that again? And I think there are, there are probably three reasons. Firstly, it was six years now since the first edition, and I continue to find really cool ideas and tips and tricks from all of my connections around the world and in the UK. And I really wanted to kind of update it with those. And then I think secondly, the recruitment and retention world has like completely shifted on it's axis in the last in Adult Social Care in the last six years. I think you guys are probably agree as well, it's certainly an awful lot of changes happen for the workforce. And social care has a lot of surface area that exposes it to risk in in terms of workforce. So. So I mean, for example, I think there are generational changes. So when I wrote the book in 2017, Generation Z, Zed is was just entering the workplace. So the kind of 20 year old was the oldest you could be. And of course, six years later, now the workforce is full of them. Yeah, so I think we've seen it, we may unpack that a little more, we've seen some like, a different worker employer relationship, I'm sure employers will agree. And then there's been sort of, as well as that incremental kind of generational change. And the increase in demand, of course, there's sort of been some sudden changes like COVID, Brexit, cost of living crisis, and I think as well, the rapid adoption of, of technology and policy change, and so on. And I think thirdly, then, the first book was mostly about recruitment, because I thought, stupidly, I was going to write two books, one on recruitment and one on retention. And I kind of got halfway through and thought Ouch. And so I squished in some retention at the end, and I always thought I needed to do more. So so the the second book is packed much more is more emphasis on the retention side. So

**Pia Rathje-Burton 04:34**

we will we'll talk a little bit more about retention a little bit later. So just jumping into it. So should social care employers be thinking about targeting when they are recruiting?

**Neil Eastwood 04:47**

I think it's a it's a fascinating question, because it that encapsulates really the secret. The secret to everything. And I think you know, my answer would be what sounds slightly contradictory is you you need a A very narrow focus. And you also need a wide focus. And what I mean is that we need to only target people with the right values, which is a narrow focus. And there aren't a you know, not everybody out there, and certainly not every active job seeker fits that criterion. But we have to stay absolutely committed to that otherwise, it's broadly you know, pointless and a waste of time and driving staff turnover. But we also at the same time, need a very wide sort of emphasis or focus. And I mean, that in terms of using a mix of recruitment channels, not over relying on one. And so we're trying to reach as many different people as possible, and that would mean diversifying the range of people we're appealing to. I mean, obviously, younger people and men are two examples of that. But I'm a real fan of lived experience. And, for example, particularly what came out of the research is family care experience. And that doesn't mean you have to be older to have that because some wonderful under 20 fives, if we pick that that group in social care, many, many of them have a brother or sister with a disability of cared for mum or dad had been brought up by grandparents. In fact, my my dad was 50, when he had me and the kids at school said, ooh your parents were killed in a crash, and it's your grandparents bringing you up, and they're not going to tell you so really odd. So, you know, I spent a lot of time around older people. And, you know, I might therefore be a better candidate for social care than perhaps, you know, it's emotional maturity, basically. And I think, I think the golden thread with all of this is values.

**Wendy Adams** 06:35

And how how would you suggest that social care employers target those people? How would you suggest they find those people in their community that might have that lived experience?

**Neil Eastwood** 06:48

Well, I think the if you're looking for values that can seem rather an invisible thing, but we can see values being demonstrated all the time Wendy I mean, family care experience is is my is my top example. But you'd look for people who are who are volunteering, evidence of giving evidence that they're putting someone else first in their lives. And, you know, that might be that they say, work for a charity, or they volunteer or they or they do something in the community for others. And I think that's a good marker. But certainly from research in the US, the family care, those with family carers past or current, are a huge group of people who have all the values that we seek. And, you know, unfortunately, with COVID, has generated a lot more people who've come into that group. And often they feel quite a long way from the job market and they want something and we social care is their perfect home.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 07:47

And they may not be sort of actively looking for jobs.

**Neil Eastwood** 07:51

Absolutely not. No. And I think that the market is definitely moving away from active job seekers now. And we saw coming through COVID, a lot of people perhaps advance their retirement plans, or have dropped out of the workforce for other reasons. Or, you know, I think a lot of people I've spoken to have sort of rethought what what am I doing, you know, when you're sort of faced with this existential

change, like, Am I happy with my admin job? And I think that is very much what we're seeing from the younger generation is like, what, why? Why should we do this, and I think this really gives us an opportunity in the social care sector to package what we offer, which is not what the NHS offers, it's something different and really compelling, if we can articulate it to the right people,

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 08:35

What are the most cost effective ways of recruiting staff?

**Neil Eastwood** 08:41

Well, I mean, I think, first of all, it's very important to understand what the costs really are. And that means a lot more kind of measurement and awareness, because people might say, well, it's free to put an ad on an internet job board. But you really need to look at the entire experience and the cost. And I always use the example of kind of cost per hour of care. And, you know, from the kind of French example of you can spend a lot of money on clothes, because you wear them a lot actually cost per wear is low. And I think we need to do is look at how many hours of care are going to be delivered from those people. And so it's not for me about a cost per hire being low or free. It's, it's about who can we get who will stay a long time. And an example of that, which I dates back a long time now, but I did a piece of work with a number of providers, looking at the number of hours of care that were delivered by recruitment source, and we saw that internet job boards, it was a matter of weeks actually, if you looked at all of like the average compared to employee referral, and you know returners, and so on, and some of those high quality sources where it could be years. So I think it's a really, you know, we need to think about how we define cost effective, but if you want specific examples as well then building relationships in the community, either with partners or, or using the employee networks trying to do outreach is something that builds a sort of bedrock and a flow of high quality people. And then, you know, they can be very, very low cost. And I think, you know, asking, asking people who've left you that you would like to come back to come back is another one, it's very, very low cost.

**Wendy Adams** 10:23

You mentioned about active job seekers, and this notion of active and passive job seekers is something you refer to in the book. Can you just tell us what you mean, by that?

**Neil Eastwood** 10:37

Yeah, so active job seekers are people who are kind of on the market, and that is actually a small percentage of those in the workforce. Or looking to be in the workforce, it's, it's not a huge percentage of people. And there's, there's shades of kind of activity. So someone might be looking every day and, you know, absolutely determined to be gone by Friday, and that they're very active job seekers. And then there are people who are kind of, you know, all casually look, but that broad group of people is certainly hugely smaller than what we now call passive or, or hidden candidates. And those are people who either are very happy in their jobs and wouldn't move for any reason. And that's actually not a huge amount. But it people that aren't maybe take the example of social care not wouldn't either lack the confidence, or unaware that this is a career option for them. And you almost need either someone to tell them that, or us as a sector to connect with them in some way, for example, family care experience, they might come into contact with care workers and say, hey, that's an amazing job you're doing could I do the same. And I think it's really exciting the opportunity for to address that passive job seeker

market, harder to find them initially. But much easier after that, because you find people with the right values, who every other employer is not chasing as well. And you can make a compelling offer, and then they're likely to stay much longer.

**Wendy Adams** 12:07

So in a very simple way, if all an employer is doing is advertising on internet job boards, then what they are targeting is those active job seekers, and they're completely missing those, those passive job seekers who don't yet know that they want to come and work for that organisation, or don't even know that they want to work in social care. That makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

**Neil Eastwood** 12:31

Yeah, completely. And I think, you know, I don't want to trash internet job boards, it would certainly be a part of my recruitment mix always will be. But you're absolutely right Wendy what you're seeing, there are two, two things. One is we know that it's broadly younger people that use an internet job board rather than older and older people would prefer a face to face conversation or recommendation or, you know, something slightly different usually. And and I think you're also finding that if you go on to an internet job board, you're faced with a search bar, and you have to type something in. So are you going to type in care worker or support worker if you haven't got that in the top of your mind. And that's why we know that internet job boards feed the majority of the candidates in the UK in social care. And when you look at the new entrants to social care, and this is one of our big problems, challenges is around growing capacity, then you'll see that I think it's only 37% of all those new starters every year actually are new to the sector. So this tells us that the internet job boards are primarily recycling existing care workers who are typing in care worker. So I think we've got two problems there. By focusing too much on one source,

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 13:44

you need to kind of almost use so many different types Don't you know, we're not saying don't do internet job boards, we're just saying, think about how are you in your local area, attracting or connecting with what would you call the passive job seeker, the ones who don't realise that they want to come and work for you. So community events? How other what other local things that you could do in terms of, of recruiting those passive job seekers?

**Neil Eastwood** 14:19

Yeah, and there's a lot of in terms of, you know, we know that we have to have a sustainable local flow of candidates, and it's very much a community based service, and therefore, you're looking in your local community. And I would call this your recruitment recruitment hinterland. So where are your existing staff living? And you can draw a little line around the boundaries and that and that, that's where you're recruiting from. And then there are a number of things you can do, obviously, I would say, you know, because of my focus on employee referral that you have, however, many employees you have as a as potential recruiters, so they're sort of, you know, feet on the street in terms of reaching out to people so it's so important, important to be an employer of choice and them actually want people to come and work for you. But there are many organisations in the local community that want to help, you know, and are very aligned with what we're doing the NHS as well, we're sort of moving closer to them that I think there's opportunities to, to, to engage with them with hospices with all sorts of places. And in the book, I

can't I've lost track with how many different places that where there are partner organisations who would actively look on your behalf. And then there's outreach itself in various forms of how can you go out into the community and meet people. And there's been some really interesting places that you can events and you can meet people at. You can also if you happen to have, it's easier if you have a setting like a residential care rather than homecare slightly trickier. But you know, you can have an event or bring people in from the community. And I mean, my favourite thing if I had a residential care setting now every summer I would have a dog show. And bring the dog. Yeah, waggiest tail, isn't it? And who looks most like the owner. That's my favourite one.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 16:04**

Yeah. And people are going there. They see the atmosphere. They think, Oh, I could I work here. Lots of posters with QR codes, QR codes. So the thing at the moment, isn't it that it's, you know, easy for people to to apply or find out more? That kind of thing? So yeah, great idea.

**Neil Eastwood 16:19**

And I think, sorry, just Pia as well on on that. I Care ambassadors is another one where you go out into the community, and actually you're what you're what you're targeting, there is generally younger people and changing perceptions for the future. But what you find as bycatch is the parents come along and say, well, that's interesting. So I think, you know, there's there's kind of outreach as well, as you know, there's active and passive sources. In the local community outreach, you can do either of those.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 16:44**

Yeah. And just to explain if you haven't heard of it, I care Ambassador, it is something that Skills for Care project that Skills for Care been working on a number of years, we have had a little bit of a we haven't done so much with it, but actually yesterday found out that that we're going to do lots of lots around I Care ambassador in the future. So really excited about that. So look out for that in the in Skills for Care communication. Just going back to the beginning, and you mentioned about doing some sort of work around working out what you know, you recruit somebody, how long are they, how many hours or care? What are the things that people should be doing when they are recruiting in terms of reviewing their their processes, or you renew and what they're doing?

**Neil Eastwood 17:28**

Yeah, I think I mean, I think that on that measurement point, it's very important to measure not everything, but I think it's really important, because you can track your improvements, and that's motivating. So I think the workforce really have a lot of the answers you need. So your existing workforce, I would always be asking them, What could we do better? How would you sell a job to a friend? You know, what do you think the differences that are particularly with our service or what appealed to you about social care, and then those people who've just joined you are, super valuable, because they've just gone through that horrific experience of trying to apply to you. So what was that like? What could we have done better? Where, you know, was there something that was really frustrating? And then if possible, people who turned you down, you know, I always like to try and find out why. So for example, we did track down people who walked out on day one of training, so they started work, and they left on the first day, and slightly under 20% of those people said no-one smiled. That's why they didn't feel welcome. So we'll come on to retention later. But I think a lot of this, of

improvements can be made simply making the experience of applying better, and responding quickly and courteously and listening to their story, because I think anyone that's joining Adult Social Care, and all the listeners will have their own story about why are you doing this instead of something else, there's obviously something that's happened in their lives that this gives them intrinsic rewards. So the more we can understand that story from people, the closer the connection is, the more likely they are to join us rather than take a job, you know, in a non social care setting,

**Pia Rathje-Burton 19:08**

So do you think you know, sort of kind of thinking about audits and stuff like that, how would you do that? So you're almost describing having some sort of audit process? Is that what you're sort of saying? Yeah, absolutely.

**Neil Eastwood 19:19**

I think the, you need to look at what's an optimised candidate process. And there isn't really, as I put in the book, there's not like one, one flow that I would say, Oh, you've got to do it exactly this way. Because people will be approaching you from different sources and that they have different expectations. So for example, if you're, if you inquire on Facebook, you are expecting a response almost immediately, because that's the expectation. And so if you placed an ad on on Facebook, or you had a post, someone responded over the weekend, and you left it 48 hours to respond, then you know they're going to be right what you lost them. Yeah. But there's there's there There are more forgiving sources as well where you know, I mean, employee referral being an example where you've got a friend. So there's more of a kind of buffer and protection. But that doesn't mean, you should take a long time to respond. I mean, we, we've looked at the average time to respond, it's very difficult to get a real number on this. But as a guide, if you have a dedicated recruiter, and a very small minority of providers have a dedicated recruiter, then the response time is about a day. If you don't have one, it's nine days, or never. And I think this is our opportunity for us. And, you know, if you're on it, you can respond within 30 minutes would be what I would expect now. And I think that's what the market expects. So So that's just one example. And that's, that's hard, isn't it? It is hard.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 20:50**

Yeah. But you almost need to kind of think about, you know, if I don't have a dedicated recruiter, how am I going to do this, you know, you almost have a bit of a rotor of people who are going to be, you know, I am the recruitment responder today, you know, that, that it's a, it because I know, I was a registered manager, it was something I did something it was I made a role for myself, I did something every day around recruitment, because that was the only way that I felt that I was in control of what was happening. So it'd be something different, but there was something every single day, and it could be something small, or it could be something I could spend spend a couple of hours on this, but I just made it my role. Every single day, I'll do something around recruitment, whatever that was, they may be putting an advert in a magazine, or, you know, there could be so many different things. But every day I did something. So

**Neil Eastwood 21:44**

yeah, and I think, you know, I would I would associate or I'm sure many of your listeners associate recruitment with pain, particularly things like you know, no shows a particularly frustrating thing. So you

don't associate it with fun. And you know, and it's, you have to, you have to keep trying to get hold of people so so we know, that, you know, can take a number of attempts before you get hold of someone, particularly if you phoned them and they didn't recognise your number, they won't respond. So texting is very much the way forward here, not just sending an email. And I think we'll come on to this later, perhaps the human aspect, the relationship aspect of social care, means that we need to maintain the human touch. So I'm watching with interest, you know, AI, and the impact it's having or starting to have on potentially on the on the recruitment process, and I am really cautious. Because if a relationship centric person who's a family carer gets put into an chat bot scenario, for too long, I would be like, there's no real people here. I'm gone.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 22:42

Yeah. Talking about no shows, what can you do to prevent? So you mentioned texting is other things you can do?

**Neil Eastwood** 22:49

Yeah, I mean, I think the starting point really is value. If you've got your values based recruiting sorted out, then you're no show sort themselves out. So if you've got people that are connected to the company, that have, you know, feel valued and interested and that this job is right for them, even if they lack confidence, I think that's the first thing to say that's where you need, the source needs to be right. The people you're asking to come to interview need to be right. So the stronger the connection, the better. If you have a no particular connection with them, you need to build that connection in the telephone interview or the interactions that you have. And that means listening to their story, for example, and giving them confidence. And there's a lot of people coming out of the, you know, from not working, let's say people, parents who might have been looking after children, family carers, they are frightened, often of an interview, haven't had one for a long time. So we need to de stress it and make them feel that this is not going to be a trial of like questions with a lamp shining their eyes, you know, this sort of got to make it more like a chat. And I think so. But practical things texting, good luck, using their name and your name saying, Oh, you'll be meeting me tomorrow, you know, I'm Pia. Good luck. You know, do you know where you're coming and all this kind of thing, reserving them a parking space, telling them there's a parking space reserved if they are driving, you know, removing stress from it. And then I think the timing is important, too. So there was some work done in the states that found first thing in the morning, but particularly five o'clock at the end of the day. 20% more likely people were going to show up. Right?

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 24:22

I was I was listening to another podcast that somebody was talking about sending their the questions in advance to people which I you know, my initial thought was like, Oh, can't do that. But actually, I've reflected on afterwards and I thought, well, if you are really anxious, and and it's not really about catching people out, it's more about getting that getting a good answer. And yes, of course somebody could Google it and so but hopefully, you know, the follow up questions you will ask will help you weed that out. You know, I think it's a really good idea to send questions in advance and also if you got you know, if you have anxiety , you know, being able to know in advance what's going to be asked would be really useful.



**Neil Eastwood 25:05**

Yeah, I think, particularly if you use values based interviewing techniques, so what you're looking for is lived examples of something they've done and how they felt and how they reacted. So it's not a standard, you know, question and answer, like, you know, I think a lot of the interview questions that you probably listeners have or a photocopy cheat from 1974. No one knows why you ask these questions, and no one knows what the right answer is. So I think values based viewing is certainly something I would encourage, because it's very specific to the person and you want to get behind the why. And you know, and also, we might find that our questions are rather biased towards people already with care sector experience. And that's a problem.

**Wendy Adams 25:43**

Yeah. Yeah. Just what you said about the text as well. So what would a tip be for, for managers, maybe to text people in the morning of the interview? Just saying, you know, looking forward to seeing you later today? As almost like a reminder?

**Neil Eastwood 26:03**

Oh, yeah, I think absolutely. I mean, I think the day before is good timing. But even on the day, yeah, absolutely. Any kind of communication and reach out. And I've seen people sending, if they send a follow up email, having a little video of them, you know, you could do very easily on your phone, just saying, you know, hi, Wendy, I'm Neil, you'll be interviewing with me today or tomorrow, can't wait to see you. So breaking down the barriers? Because I do feel and I don't have a quantitative evidence for this. But just from hanging around and talking to lots of people, is that I think a lot of people are fearful. And the you know, almost the right people for social care are the ones that question themselves and think I couldn't do this job. And that means you probably could do the job. Yeah. Because you're thinking, oh, you know, would I be good enough? You know, you've got you're holding the role in high esteem. And I think, you know, just giving people the confidence to give it a go. And we would, we would be much better off.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 27:02**

Yeah. You mentioned right at the beginning, when we started to chat, this book, the new edition of the book, it has a big focus on retention. Just thinking about retention, what are the sort of kind of quick wins? What are the things that people can do in terms of if they are either developing a retention action plan? Or, you know, they're thinking about? Well, you know, I need to retain my staff, so I don't have to recruit so much. What are the quick wins?

**Neil Eastwood 27:28**

Well, yeah, I think I list 10 in the book, my favourites. So I'm not gonna go through all 10. But I mean, I think particularly, we know that the majority of our staff turnover problem is in the first 90 days. And probably as we mentioned, as there's an issue in the first day, because people will make their mind up if they've made a mistake or not in that very first few moments. So I strongly advise to putting together a welcome programme. It doesn't have to be grand, it's just simple gestures that would show that people are valued and welcomed. And you can start that before they've even started sending them welcome card home was something I saw, was it Australia, I can't remember where I saw that. But I've told lots of people about it. And I get loads of feedback about what a great idea. And it's something

really simple that says we can't wait for you to join, right? So I'm going to come in with a smile on my face feeling like I'm, I'm valued. But one of my favourite things again, in fact, this ends up in an argument often is I say, you should ask during the application process for their favourite chocolate bar, and then buy that you know, for them and have it and give it to them in a little goodie bag if you want when they join. And I innocently said it can't be bounty, because that's just offensive. And then with some I hope there aren't any bounty lovers on the call. Really, some people have absolutely no idea that twirls are the best and they seem deluded. So I think there's a whole this whole welcome programme. And I think as well, you know, writing letters home long, long term recruitment, retention, is about reinforcing appreciation. You know, we don't often we don't have the ability to perhaps pay as much as we would love to pay in many cases. So it's not a it's not a well, we can't do much about that. It's about people who've chosen this calling to regularly appreciate and acknowledge that through recognition methods and through appreciation methods. And writing a note home is very powerful, because that goes to the family if you there is a family and the partner and the friends see it. And what you're doing then is building goodwill with those people who might influence to say, why are you doing that job? You know, it's why when you could do something else, and they don't understand that that person has those kind of psychological, intrinsic rewards that only social care can give.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 29:39**

Yeah, that's all more quite a long thing, long term things that employers can do.

**Neil Eastwood 29:44**

I think my one of my favourites is, is peer mentoring, of course, that's peer not pia and I think that is supremely powerful. It not only helps those people joining and we We need more people new to the care sector. So giving them structured support is important. But what it also does is for those people, more experienced care staff, it gives them, you know, kind of a way of learning and adding to their job. And, and I think that's really, really powerful. And there's lots of research I saw in the US home care sector, about just how powerful and influential that is. And I think that also came out of your secrets of success Report as one of the things. So I'm like a massive fan of, of peer mentoring. And then I think, you know, well, a couple of others really briefly, what one would be interpersonal skills training, sort of relationship centric training, which I think we ignore, when actually social care is all about relationships. And we don't, let's say, train staff on active listening brain free language, the ability to manage conflict and stress and stressful times with clients and residents and stress between colleagues and with supervisors. And I think this is a huge area of opportunity, too. And I actually saw some training materials in the US read them just read them once. And it improved my relationship with, with my son who I always blamed for everything and actually turned out it wasn't his fault, after all, but you can actually you can actually help people in their personal lives. And I think what what social care is really people, it's a vocation. And we need to look at the whole person. And we can support often giving and caring people giving and caring in their private lives, they have a lot of conflict and a lot of guilt. There are a lot of people wanting some of their time. And they have often, you know, huge responsibilities and can have a lot of challenges in their life and helping them navigate that with with skills that also help us as employers and help the clients, I think we should do way more of it.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 31:54**

Yeah. To kind of have that part of your training plan that, you know, thinking about those soft skills, what are the what are the things you're needing? And, you know, trying to think about? Well, what, how are we going to make sure that this is used as part of retention isn't, you know, making sure your managers, anybody who are, you know, have any kind of managerial experience, responsibility, are trained to speak to people to manage stress to all the things you just said,

**Wendy Adams 32:23**

but I think not just the people, managers, either. You know, one of the one of the things we talk to frontline care workers about a lot is about how they communicate with the people who they're providing care and support to, you know, how they interact with them. But I think often what we don't say to people is, how do you carry those same values and skills into your interaction with your your colleagues that are in your own in your own team. And I think for many of us, sitting listening, listening to this today, many people will think about why they've left jobs previously. And often the reason that you've left a job previously, is not because you didn't like the work, but because you may be found particular colleagues difficult to interact with, or, you know, sometimes the person who maybe is supervising you, but often, it's the colleagues, it's the peers, you you work with. And I think, you know, we don't always think that we should apply some of the same values around person centeredness and kindness and respect that we treat the people who use services with, to our colleagues as well. And I think we just don't think about that sometimes.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 33:42**

Pretty important, isn't it? And in terms of kind of careers, I suppose that's the other thing with with retention, think, you know, being you know, talking to people about what do they want from their careers, because I agree Wendy you know, a lot of times people leave jobs because of, not because of the job or because of the people but they as a career aspect, as well. And we want, you know, people to have careers in social care don't we really

**Neil Eastwood 34:06**

Oh, ya know, when I was in Europe, I saw the most common job title is not care worker at all, it's auxiliary nurse. And there's, you know, very encouraged to have training and there's a pathway and, you know, without getting political, you know, we decided whenever it was 1990 We don't want stay enrolled nurses or whatever. And I think I think social care can be the kind of training ground for nurses, not everyone wants to be a nurse. I understand that. But even for me, who I think if I came into social care, thinking I could learn valuable medical skills and relationship skills. And now I think we need to make an offer particularly to the younger generation, which is like okay, well, what skills are you going to teach me? How is this going to help me with my life even if you're not with social care forever? I think we should be really welcoming for the period of time we have them and if we could say to them, you will get nowhere else. We will give you all of Those relationship skills. And I think, you know, the younger generation sound really old for, say, the younger generation, but all of us now spending too much time on our phones, you know, the kids are in bedrooms on their phone electronically communicating, they're not talking over the garden fence with the next door neighbor's interacting with older people, and we've lost something. And I think social care can be the place that you know, even if you do it for a couple of years, like the sort of national service, you we will give you relationship skills for life, this will help you in your personal relationships and in interactions with everybody in your life. And we will can

give you, you know, useful medical skills and other and other harder skills, that basket that offer that basket of skills is super compelling to people. And then we add on top of that, you're actually making a difference to society. And it's, you know, you're, you're really helping kind of create this kind of social capital back into the country. That's what we need to be selling.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 36:01**

Yeah. I suppose having those conversation quite early on somebody joining you saying, Well, what, you know, what can we do for you, you know, what's your what, what would you like your career to look like in social care, and there's so many aspects to it, or the you know, it's there's, you know, the kind of leadership or those, as you say, you know, kind of clinical skills, but there's also, you know, so many other other skills that you can kind of enhance on, you know, and just sort of kind of talk to people and, and obviously, there's some people who say, well, actually, what I really want is to work somewhere that I'm supported, and, you know, feel valued, and I have a voice and I don't want to move my career on to anywhere and that that's fine. We've had the conversation, and that's fine. But if they are, and there will be staff within your, your team, they will have ambitions, and it's about having an open honest conversations. And even if that means well, in five years time, I'm likely to leave you because I'm gonna go and do then you know that but you can you can utilise them why you're why they're with you, and you rather have them working for you those five years than they're not working for you. It's five years, don't you really. So it's just really think you haven't heard those upfront conversations and style of somebody working for you.

**Wendy Adams 37:10**

So Neil, we we have our time for care slot in every episode. So I want to ask you the same question that we ask all of our guests, right, it's your most time saving tips that you could share with people?

**Neil Eastwood 37:25**

Oh, well, actually, it's one that seems rather odd, but it's meditation. And I'm in I'm a newbie, to meditation, and I thought, I don't have time for meditation, you know, I'm super busy. And actually, a lot of the time, I'm it totally ineffective, and inefficient. And meditation helps also reduce stress and anxiety, which, you know, I know, listeners, if your registered managers will be familiar with, with that, and I think less time spent worrying about things, and I'm talking about myself personally. And the more time you can spend doing things you want to do so. So the science on meditation, you know, I was very sceptical is is, is that, you know, by concentrating on your breathing and whatever, just having a bit of time where, you know, the phone is off, which has been really hard for me to do, and sort of just focusing and thinking about the day, it's really helping to the my efficiency through the day, and I my focus has improved, I'm still not very good at it. But just having that time to, to yourself, instead of diving in and trying to fix everything actually gives you time back and makes you more efficient and less stress. So I think, yeah, reflection time is a really, really good time saver.

**Wendy Adams 38:42**

Excellent. And I think managers have, you know, feel like, well, as you said, Well haven't got time for that, or I feel guilty about taking that five minutes. But actually, if you think about the fact that that five minutes might make you more productive for the rest of the day, then you know, it's time well spent. I've got a final question for you. Which is, imagine we're in a lift on the 10th floor, going down with a group

of registered managers. And before everyone gets out at the bottom, what you want to tell them what you think is the most important your key message to leave them with, what would that be Neil?

**Neil Eastwood** 39:20

Okay, so how many floors? I've got 10 floors, 10 floors, so you

**Wendy Adams** 39:23

need to be quick.

**Neil Eastwood** 39:25

Right, okay. Well, I think you know, from all of my learning in this topic, and I'm still learning, I think the key to building a loyal and high performing workforce, if there's three, there's three pillars, really, and we're probably on floor eight now is number one is recruiting only those people with the right values and never compromising even if you really need someone because it's going to go wrong if there's very low job attachments. So always stay true to those values would be my first point and we're probably halfway down now. So they're nurturing their key relationships. So we talked a little bit about this before but but a care worker, if we can use that generic term has some key relationships that we need to nurture and and protect. One is with the supervisor. So we talked about how you could do that their colleagues as well, those the first two, and then their clients or residents, which is usually a very strong one anyway, and then their family support network. So be aware of the registered manager of those four invisible connections, and look and see whether you think there's weakness somewhere, or how you can help strengthen them and sort of refill their emotional cup. And then finally, I think I would say, as we're coming down to the ground floor, regularly appreciating people and celebrating their contribution. And if you're a busy registered manager, it's easy to forget to do that. But that quiet word of thanks, and well done is the reason that they will stay. So that is more important than filling in another CQC form, or you'll probably have to edit that out now. So, you know, I think people have chosen a life of service and we in society should be visibly grateful. And and managers are at the forefront, they have the most opportunity to do that. So celebrate and write a note home. And I think the lift pinged and we're going out in

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 41:07

a diary in those thank yous if you're likely to forget was the sort of person I am I'd forget. So diary diary in, this is your Thank you. Thank you, hour Thank you. That's all really very useful. Thank you so much.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 41:32

So Wendy, what really stood out to you today?

**Wendy Adams** 41:36

I think one of the things that stood out for me particularly is is that Neil really was emphasising the importance of retention, not just recruitment, because I think if you focus on recruitment, but actually you're losing staff, as quick as you're recruiting them, then you're still going to have those vacancies. And I think that reminds me really of the importance of the launch of our updated value based recruitment toolkit. And the toolkit covers the five A's models. So focusing right through about how do you share your values? How do you use them to attract people to come and work for you how to build

them into the application process and demonstrate them to your applicants? How do you assess them? But also how do you build those values into your day to day interactions with with your staff. And the other thing that that struck me really was what Neil was saying about the best, or one of the best sources of recruitment being family and friends of those people that already work for you. Because the chances are if people work for you have got the right values, their friends and family will also have the right values for social care as well. And that just reminded me about the importance of something like the care friends app, and how helpful that can be not just around recruitment, but also about recognising and rewarding staff performance, as well as is finding that hidden talent or those passive job seekers in the community. So some great stuff there. I thought,

**Pia Rathje-Burton 43:14**

yeah, we did cover a huge amount, I think what's really stood out for me was just thinking about that the higher versus the number of hours that the person is going to work for you. So I think if I think if I was listening to this, I'd I'd be looking at doing some sort of recruitment audit. And just really kind of thinking about all the staff you recruited over the last maybe six months and then look at how many hours have you got out and what's working, what's not working? And what are you getting getting results out of? I will usually talk about another Skills for Care resource, but I'm going to take this time just to talk about listening to podcasts. So we know that 85% of you those listening live today haven't listened to a care exchange podcast before. So first of all, just to to let you know that as I said at the beginning, this is the first episode of Series four, there's 3 previous episodes series to listen to so 30 Odd episodes that you can go back and listen to. We created the care exchange as a way another way for us to talk to you as managers, but really it was about talking to other managers working in social care, getting their best practice about how they're doing things. You know, we've had topics around CQC, recruitment, quality leadership. So if all those things would be of interest, you go back and have a have a listen to the 30 Odd episodes that that we've already recorded. I know 60% of you those listening today have not listened to a podcast ever. So I'm going to do an a little bit of a masterclass on how to and listen to podcasts, it really isn't complicated. Your option one is go to Skills for Care website, and we'll put links, how to how you know where to find is on the website under register managed support, and then you can listen online. If you do that you do need to be next to your computer or your your your phone, however, and you need to be connected to that. The other way of doing it, which is the way most people listen to podcast is that they, if you have a smartphone, you download a podcast app, and you most likely already have one on your smartphone. So it could be Spotify, it could be iTunes, Amazon music, or you there's a particular podcast platform called pod beam. So any of those you can do, you would then if you haven't got one, download one of those. And if you already have it, you're there. So it's for the care exchange. And you will see us come up you'll see the logo, and you just follow that, that, that and then you can see all the different episodes. So all those 30 Odd episodes is available. You can set up notifications. So every time a new episode comes out, you will you'll get notification or you can decide not to do that. My My top tip would be if you're going somewhere and you're going to you want to listen to the podcast, you can easily download the episodes you can listen without the Internet. So if you're going going somewhere where you're not going to be having Wi Fi, it's really easy. There's like three dots and you press that and it says download and you'll download that. Personally, I listen to lots of podcasts. And I do that when I'm walking my dog. If I'm doing some kind of manual tasks like gardening, ironing or washing up or something along those lines, I listen to podcasts. While I'm doing that, and I find a really interacting are, you know, pick up loads of good ideas. And obviously,

I will encourage you to listen to the care exchange. But there are lots of other podcasts out there. Just finally, before finishing talking about podcast, we talked about Show Notes already. Again, when you're listening to your podcast through one of those apps I talked about earlier, you will see underneath there'll be a bit of a summary about what we talked about. And then there'll be links to the Skills for Care resources that we've talked about. That will always also be there on the website. So that's it for now. Thank you very much for joining us in this special episode of the care exchange. Thank you Neil, very much for joining us today. It was really useful to hear for you.

**Neil Eastwood** 47:32

Thank you everyone.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 47:34

And thank you so if you joined us live we hope you have enjoyed this episode and you will continue to listen to the care exchange podcast. Bye for now. Bye