

HCPA's Best Practice Guide to Recruiting, Onboarding and Retaining Staff

#GoodCare

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INTRODUCTION

Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) has delivered the Herts Good Care Recruitment service since 2016. During this time, we have supported HCPA members with direct recruitment; one-to-one recruitment and retention support visits; study days; recruitment and retention training; and more.

Our goal is to improve the quality of care across Hertfordshire and one of the biggest impacts on this is the quality of staff working within your organisation. We promote Adult Social Care as a great career option with a wider goal to reduce the negative stigma associated with the sector. This toolkit is a guided journey from recruiting staff, to onboarding and then retaining staff. This guidance has been created from our experience supporting HCPA members, feedback from employers who have the most success, and our team's extensive knowledge and understanding of these subject areas.

This toolkit is to support you as an employer to empathise with the jobseekers and look at the process from their point of view. When an individual starts a new role, especially if they have no previous experience, they may be nervous and there are a lot of small changes you could make to make it an easier transition for them.



WHO DO YOU WANT TO ATTRACT?

The right values

Values are the views and beliefs that people have about what is right or wrong and will influence how an individual behaves in certain situations, both in their work and personal life.

Having a team who hold similar personal values to your company values and who have a genuine caring passion and attitude to supporting vulnerable adults is key to retaining your staff. At whatever stage of the recruitment process, whether writing an advert or interviewing the candidate, you should be clear that you are looking for someone who hold similar values to you as an organisation.

As soon as someone joins the team who does not share similar values it can have a detrimental affect on your overall team morale and the quality of care delivered.

Herts Good Care Recruitment, HCPA's free recruitment service, can provide psychometric reports that delve into applicants' values: This tool will help you when interviewing to ensure you can make an informed decision on if an individual is right for your team. Remember that values and attitude are key to get right at recruitment stage, the skills to carry out the role can be taught.

Treat everyone with dignity

Dedicated to working together and supporting my team

Learn and reflect in everything we do

Commitment to providing high quality care

Open-minded to different views and opinions

Build and maintain professional relationships

Soft skills

The ability to empathise is a soft skill that is required from everyone working in Adult Social Care. This is something you want to look out for at the hiring stage. Whether an individual will be communicating with colleagues, clients, healthcare professionals or family members empathy and emotional intelligence will allow them to do so effectively for the best outcomes.

This is just one example, but there will be other soft skills that are important to you as an employer and your clients, and it is important that you are clear on what these are when you start the hiring process.



Offering work experience

If you provide a work experience option, this is a great way for students and individuals who are not quite ready for full or part time employment to discover if Adult Social Care is right for them. This also provides them with life skills such as increased empathy, understanding and listening skills that they can take into their future social care careers.

For you as an employer, this is your opportunity to inspire a young person to choose a career in Adult Social Care. You may even offer them a job at the end of the agreed work experience. You can also promote your organisation via the Herts Good Care Campaign by sharing stories on social media and with HCPA about how an individual on work experience has had an impact on your clients.

The benefits to clients are endless. It reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation and allows for all generations to learn new skills and to have fun. [View HCPA's Intergenerational Toolkit here.](#)

Face-to-face ideas	Virtual ideas
A day in the life: Shadow a staff member as they do their shift to see what it is like to have that job role	A Q&A session with staff teams where they find out about their job role. This could also include a walk through of 'a day in the life'
Planning and delivering an activities session alongside the activities coordinator	Create a quiz as a student team that can be delivered via a video call with residents in a care home or clients in their own homes
Making memory boxes for residents	A student will be matched with a client who can provide them with memories and key points in their life history. The student will go away and make a memory presentation to share back with the client at a later date. Staff can support by emailing across any photos and information about the individual
Support with mealtimes and learn from other staff about the different dietary requirements of residents	Offer one-to-one video calls where a client can be matched with a student for companionship, to learn about each other and have a chat
	Games: Play a game such a Charades in two teams, students versus clients on video call. The activities coordinator can keep score
	Digital Skills: Show the older generation how to write an email via video call, or how to make a WhatsApp video call to a friend or family member
	Teach some Makaton (sign-language): Students to learn and teach Makaton to clients. Beneficial for those who are hard-of-hearing or just want to learn a new skill!

Employing under 18s

Many young people are employed in the hospitality or retail industry, which are both sectors that have been hard hit by the national lockdowns.

The statistics change regularly but as of July 2020 there were more than 276,000 young people between the age of 16 and 24 claiming out of work benefits and actively seeking work in other sectors, including Adult Social Care. (Source: BBC).

If you are actively recruiting for care and support staff, now is the time to actively look to recruit young people and grow your workforce!

How do I attract young people?

Offer part-time opportunities

You may have 16 and 17-year-old applicants who are studying Level 2 or Level 3 Health and Social Care at college and may already be interested in working in the Adult Social Care sector.

Some of these students will be looking for a part-time role. You can inspire them to choose care as their career by offering part-time evening and weekend work and/or weekday work on their days off college.

Offer apprenticeships or traineeships

A young person must be in full time education or training when they are aged 16 or 17 by law but many would rather take the working route. Offering the education alongside their role will help them to choose social care long term and provide them with the qualifications they need, ready for career progression at the end of their studies.

[Click here for full guidance on hiring 16 and 17 year olds](#)

What are the benefits of employing a young person?



BUILDING YOUR **COMPANY REPUTATION**

Your Vision and Values

We have already mentioned the importance of ensuring you hire for the right values, but what about your own company values?

Your company vision and values are at the centre of everything you do from frontline to strategic level. Having your staff live and work your vision and values will increase your staff retention, and ensure they are providing the highest quality care and support.

A company vision should be an extension of your mission statement, where you envision your company will grow to while acting on your mission and goals on a day to day basis. Expressing what this is clearly will show candidates what you want to achieve and that they can be a part of it.

Your values coincide with the vision. The values are how you are going to achieve the vision through your behaviours in which you conduct business or wish to conduct business.

Tip: *If you cannot think what your company vision and values are then now may be the time to sit down with your leadership team and clarify these: Consider what it is you want to achieve as a care business and how you wish to achieve these and this will form the basis of your company vision and values.*

The Importance of Brand Awareness

Is your company's brand important to you? If it isn't, why should it be important to anyone else?

In the Harvard Business Review "Case Study: Brands and Branding", author Douglas B. Holt defines a brand in personal terms as "the product as experienced and valued by the customer in everyday life."

Take a moment to think of a company you value or engage with frequently; what are the first things that come to mind? Is it the service this particular company provides, is it the company's message, it's name, or is it the logo? While yes the tangible deliverables and services offered are an important part of the success of a business, the brand is arguably as important as it enables you to connect to your desired audience and gather clients.



Key things to think about with your branding:

Logo: Is the image a clear and honest representation of your service? Is it clear what is going on, and can it be read and understood big and large on a billboard, as well as small on a letterhead?

Name: Having the word “Care” in the name will help people understand what sector your business belongs to, but will it help you stand out from the crowd?

Unique Selling Point (USP): What makes your business unique and special to the one next door? Focusing on a specific USP can help you ‘sell’ the business or service to those looking for it. Do you run a special type of service? Is your establishment convenient to get to from public transport? Is your staff particularly well trained or qualified? Is your company built on a heritage site, established a long time ago?

Mission Statement: The mission statement is a short statement of why your company exists, what its overall goal is, and what the goal of its operation is. Every decision a company makes should fall in line of the mission statement. As an example, Hertfordshire Care Providers Association’s mission statement is “Sharing best practice in Care through partnership”. This is true throughout every decision made at HCPA and every service that runs. Our main goal is to improve the practice of Care, which is assisted in partnership with governing bodies to ensure our intelligence is compliant with national and local guidance.

The wrong message or doing something that goes against your message could lose trust in even your most loyal customers.

Tone of voice: In your literature and publications, do you want to appear formal or friendly? Detailed and scientific, or down-to-earth? Making your language relatable to the audience can help ease the difficult process of looking for care solutions for a loved one.

The choice of colour you use for your branding can have a powerful impact on your audience.

Did you know there is a psychological science behind colours and how brands are perceived?

Red colours are exciting, youthful, and bold

Orange colours are friendly, cheerful, and confident

Yellow colours are optimistic, offer clarity, and warmth

Green colours are peaceful, promote growth and good health

Purple colours are associated with creativity, imagination, and wisdom

Blue colours are associated with trust, dependability, and strength

Whites/blacks are balanced, calm, and neutral

Local Community Presence

Community engagement is a key part of moving your CQC rating from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'. Getting involved in HCPA's Good Care Campaign is a great start to achieving this. You can find out more about the campaign and how to get involved by visiting www.hertsgoodcare.com/recruit

When thinking about the benefit of your local community presence for your recruitment efforts it is worth thinking about engaging with local businesses, schools and public services to spread your brand awareness. By regularly getting involved with these organisations you will build up your relationships.

When recruiting, this means that through word of mouth you would be more likely to get referrals in the long term. Even if you are not recruiting at one point, keeping up your local community presence is important should you then need to start a recruitment drive. Your company will more likely come up in general conversations people have about care and jobs.

Here is one example of how a company may start building their community presence:

You have donated a couple of items to a local school raffle or fundraising event. You also left a few leaflets when you dropped off your contribution. A few of the parents have picked these up or read them when waiting in reception and your company name was recognised when the raffle was drawn. You do similar things with other local businesses too, even if it is just a leaflet drop.

A few weeks later you notice you have received more direct calls, emails and website applications. You start asking where they heard about you. One of them heard from their sister who has children at the local school and read a leaflet. One had seen something shared on Facebook from a parent of the school who won the raffle.

Online and Social Media Presence

In the modern age, people will look for a job in care online. They will most likely google companies that are within a suitable location, and probably whittle this decision down by reading reviews from other people directly on Google, to view what people say about them on Social Media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, or to view what kind of organisation they are by viewing the type of posts made by the company. This engagement with the public is therefore very important.

Having a website, and social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and engaging with these platforms regularly would be a great benefit to attract new staff, but can also help with new business and strengthening relations with your current clients and their family members for them to see what their loved ones are up to (with consent to post online first, of course!).

Below we have outlined how you can make use of the different social media platforms with the most success:

 **Facebook:** This platform tends to be the first social platform that potential candidates, clients and families will check to get a 'feel' for the company. Firstly, ensure your 'Business details' section is as up to date as possible.

Facebook is great for posting videos and curated content. Most of the content that you post to Instagram and Twitter can also be posted here too. It is also a good platform to post your current job vacancies. If you decide to sponsor the post you can dictate who will view this based on their interests, location and other demographics.

 **Instagram:** This platform (similarly to Facebook) is a public focussed platform. Therefore, we recommend using this platform to tell a story of day-to-day life at your Care setting by using photos, videos and quotes to tell a story. Consider using the Instagram Stories feature for announcements/news/updates, things that may be important for people to see but will not affect the true feel of the profile that you are trying to create.

 **Twitter:** This platform is best used for Business to Business (B2B) content so can include posts such as news (retweeted from your own website), job vacancies and blog posts. tools around to help you! Consider setting time in your diary to scheduling multiple posts for a couple of weeks, leaving you more time

Linking your online presence to your brand is an important step with continuity; People should see your name and logo when they are first doing research, all the way down to making the decision to choose your service to work for. This consistency will help strengthen trust with potential new employees, enforcing the fact that the company they are registering with, is the same one they chose when searching online. Remember, with over 4000 vacancies in Hertfordshire alone, there is a lot of competition so you need to stand out!

Having a social media presence will make you appear approachable, human, and proud of the service you offer, but most importantly, it will make you seem real.

It is incredibly easy to create a social media account, and it is very easy to add links to these on a website. What is not as easy is committing to keeping on top of it through posting content, and engaging with the public. Here are some examples to help ease this process:

- 'Follow' other Care companies, national bodies, and public figures from within the county. This will enable you to keep up-to-date with any important information, and can share with those who might be following you. This will help you appear reputable.
- Engage with people: Reply to any messages to your company in a kind and friendly manner, or get involved in conversations. Remember to keep it professional though, as social media platforms are windows into the inner workings of your business.
- Post or re-share relevant content:
 - » Share photos and videos of those you support having a great time within your service (with consent, don't forget!)
 - » Share your job posts with video, photo or written testimonials from your current staff. This will personalise the job posting
 - » Any good news or success stories from within your organisation
 - » Important articles from within the sector; Maybe share how your organisation can add value, or what your organisation's stance is on certain things

Take inspiration:

Following others and seeing how they engage with their online audience can help you find your own ground. It's important to know there is no real wrong or right way.

Helpful resources:

Managing your social media platforms and making sure they are updated frequently can seem like a daunting task but there are plenty of tools around to help you! Consider setting time in your diary to scheduling multiple posts for a couple of weeks, leaving you more time for your other duties.

Potential scheduling tools to use:

- Buffer
- Later
- Hootsuite
- And many more!



WRITING AN **ATTRACTIVE JOB ADVERT**

Why is a strong job advert important?

1. **First Impressions:** Your advert is likely to be the first information a jobseeker sees about your company. It is important that it 'sells' your role to that potential candidate so they choose to apply for you
2. **Attracts the right candidates:** Your advert should clearly show what you are looking for in the right candidate and push the right candidates to apply for your role
3. **Be competitive:** Being competitive is key if you are to have success with your recruitment efforts and attract the best people to your company. There are over 700 Adult Social Care employers in Hertfordshire alone, so what makes you stand out?

Tips on being competitive:

- Regularly review your pay rates
- Pay for DBS checks and uniforms
- Be flexible with your staff
- Ensure your existing staff teams only have good things to say about your company
- Push to get at least a "Good" CQC rating
- Make clear the career progression on offer and opportunities for skills development

Top tips on writing your advert

There are over 4000 vacancies in Adult Social Care in Hertfordshire alone, so your advert needs to really consider what is important to the job seeker. Have you tried thinking from the jobseeker's perspective while writing your job advert? An advert is often the first information a candidate will receive about your company and vacancy and so it is important you cover what a jobseeker is looking to know.

VISION AND VALUES:

You want the candidate to be intrigued by your company, and choose you over other employers, so tell them what is important to you as an organisation. If they are the right person for you, and hold similar values 'this will help them choose to apply for your vacancy. When hiring for frontline care and support roles your focus should be on the candidates.

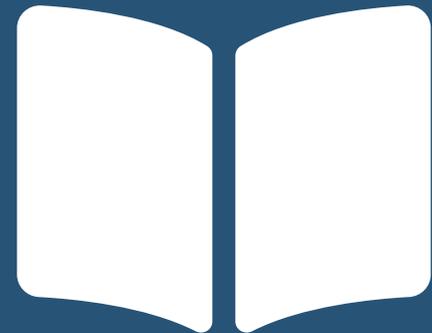


COVER THE BASICS:

Pay, contracted hours, shift times, location, and mileage/driving requirement are all important to include. The candidate will want to know how much they will get paid per shift, where they are working, how many weekends on average they will be working and what hours they need to be available for. If you pay only for call times this should also be clear in your advert, as it will affect their take-home pay.

EASY READING:

Your advert is a sales pitch to a potential employee. Writing in an informal way does not need to take away from your professionalism, but it will be more likely to grab the readers attention. Your advert should not just be your job duties copied and pasted from a contract, but a more thought out overview that tells the jobseeker what their day to day job could look like. You could be as creative as you want when writing your advert.



STAY HONEST:

As much as your job advert is your chance to shine with potential jobseekers make sure it is honest. For example, if you pay £10 weekdays, £12 weekends and £20 bank holidays your pay range should say £10 to £12 but you can add a point in your benefits section advising bank holidays are paid at £20 per hour. If your advert states £10 to £20 per hour, then this can mislead the candidate into thinking the pay is higher than it is leading to disappointment further along the application process, and can result in them not wanting to work for you.

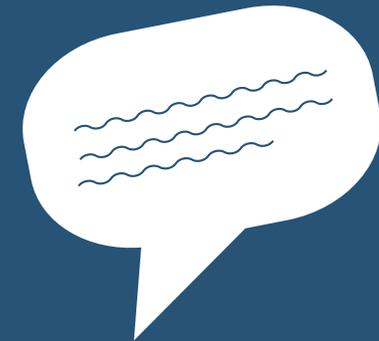


MOTIVATING FACTORS:

Each job applicant will have different parts of a job that are most important to them. One person could be looking for career progression, another person could just be looking for a part time role that works flexibly around other responsibilities, and someone else could be choosing to change company because they want more guaranteed hours.

DON'T SAY TOO MUCH:

An advert should be an overview to give the candidate an idea of what the job will involve, provide an insight to the company and whether they are the right person for your company. If you were writing your whole advert on a word document, you should be able to cover it within 1 page. You can always provide more information once you have shortlisted and contacted the applicant.



What should my advert include?

If you are unsure of how best to approach your advert the easiest method for readability and to cover all required information is to split into the following four core areas:

About the company	Pay and Benefits	The job duties	The ideal candidate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Tell the candidate what you do, who you support and why you are hiring for this role■ This is important as there are so many care companies for them to choose from■ Make sure to mention your company vision and values in this section	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Think back to candidate motivating factors and what you offer and do for your staff■ Remember it is not just about the pay rate but the learning and development, flexibility and working environment too■ Ask yourself, 'why would I want to apply to work for this company?' when writing down your pay and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ A maximum of 12 bullet points or you could categorise into task type■ This section should tell the candidate what their day to day role will involve■ You can make this personal and direct e.g. 'You will be helping clients...'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Your chance to emphasise the values and commitment you are looking for in your staff■ You may also need to include operational requirements such as if driving is required

Example advert:

About the Company

Care Company A is offering an exciting opportunity for you to work for us as a Care Assistant. We are a domiciliary home care company providing support to individuals in their own homes across South Hertfordshire. We cover Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Tring, Watford and Borehamwood and surrounding towns and villages.

The individuals we care for and support have various needs but many are older adults, some are living with dementia, and/or physical or learning disabilities. Our company goal is to provide the highest standards of care as we would expect to be cared for ourselves. If you have a similar passion to provide the highest standards of care then would like you to join the team to provide person-centred care to some of our clients in Watford.

Why should I apply for this job?

- Earn £10 per hour on weekdays and £12 per hour on weekends
- You will be paid start to finish and we will pay you for mileage between calls
- The pay scale increases based on length of service, experience, and qualifications
- Work close to home
- Various shift patterns are available, let us know your availability
- Full-time, part-time, and 0-hour contracts available
- You will spend a minimum of 30-minute visits with each person
- We are dedicated to developing you and can provide training to help you progress including your level 2 and level 3 qualifications in Health and Social Care
- Events for clients throughout the year, which you can be involved in
- Team building and fun days to thank you for your hard work
- Free uniform
- We will pay for your DBS (criminal record) check
- Refer a friend bonus scheme
- Become a Care Academy Affiliate and have access to discounts, offers, and deals from Herts Rewards
- Pension scheme enrolment
- Opportunities to apply as an apprentice

What does the role involve?

As a Care Assistant you will be helping our clients to live their lives as independently as possible in their own homes, supporting them to make choices about their care, be involved and have a voice. You will help them with their everyday living and this may include:

- 1. Daily Living:** Assisting clients with going about their daily life, from support with medication, to preparing meals, and helping them to keep well. For example: prompting/administering medication, meal planning and preparation, assistance with eating and drinking, helping individuals with reduced mobility to move around, assisting with life skills such as cooking, budgeting, tidying and laundry.
- 2. Community:** Accompanying clients accessing the community and attending their chosen activities in line with their personal care and support plan. For example: shopping and leisure activities, exercising, attending medical and other appointments. This can include liaising with health care professionals.
- 3. Companionship:** Building professional relationships with clients, assisting with their emotional, social, and spiritual needs whilst encouraging independence and choice. You may also liaise with family members and next of kin when building your professional relationships with clients.
- 4. Personal care:** Supporting service users with their care needs in line with their individual care plan. This may include assisting with personal care as required by the individual. For example: supporting to get dressed, continence needs, washing and bathing, shaving, skin, hair, foot care and dental hygiene.

Am I the right person for this job?

- If you have a caring and compassionate nature, and really want to make a difference to someone's quality of life then this role could be right for you
- You do not need experience as we will provide full training and a top induction programme to ensure you are fully confident before providing care on your own
- You may have some transferrable skills such as customer service or creativity, or soft skills such as being a good listener, being observant and empathetic which will help you in your role as a Care Assistant
- Due to visiting individuals in their own home, we do prefer drivers, although we have some shifts where you are able double up or walk between calls.
- If you can commit to working shift patterns between the hours of 7am and 10pm and are available to work every other weekend, then we would like to hear from you.

If you apply for this role we will be in contact as soon as possible. You can also call or email us to discuss the job vacancy further and visit our website for more information.

ADVERTISING METHODS

HCPA's Recruitment Support

What is Herts Good Care Recruitment?

Herts Good Care Recruitment is a partnership between Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), providing a fully funded recruitment service to HCPA members.

Our goal is to support you to find caring and compassionate staff, using a values-based method when speaking with your potential employees. The Herts Good Care team have extensive care and recruitment experience and are dedicated to matching candidates to the right company and job for them.

As well as direct recruitment support we provide: study days; training sessions; one to one support visits.

How can Herts Good Care help?

We are an additional recruitment tool to use alongside your own recruitment methods. We take the hard work and resources out of filtering through applicants. If you use job boards you may make a judgement based just off a CV. We will screen these candidates to find out more so that you have more information to make an informed choice whether to contact the applicant further and arrange an interview.

1. Source candidates

This could be via our website, referrals, campaigns, job boards or community engagement. We are always looking for new and innovative ways to attract candidates to a role in Adult Social Care.

2. Screen candidates

We complete a telephone or face to face chat with the candidate. The goal of this screening is to find out firstly if they have the right values to work in the sector, and secondly to match them to job opportunities that suit them specifically.

3. Send you applicants

If the candidate has passed step 2, you and some other local employers may be sent their details. This will include their contact details, CV and some additional information from the screening. At this stage you will need to contact them further via phone to discuss your job and company in more detail.

4. Request an interview

You can arrange interviews directly with the candidate, all we ask is that you keep us informed if you do so. Once you have had an initial chat with a candidate, we are also happy to arrange the interview on your behalf. You will need to provide us with interview slots, location, contact on arrive and any preparation and additional information that should be sent to the candidate. We still recommend you do this yourself to build rapport directly with the candidate.

5. Preparation

It is important we are kept informed of any interviews so that we can support the candidate and ensure they are fully prepared. We provide one to one support with interview preparation where needed and requested.

6. Feedback

Keep us informed on the outcome of interviews. It is important that we log any interviews or hired candidates to continue to obtain funding and provide a free service. We also love to receive feedback so that we can continue to make improvements to our service.

7. Follow up

We will check in with yourself and your new employee at three intervals after being made aware of the candidates start date. This is after 1, 3 and 6 months of employment.

You can read the full terms and conditions about using the Herts Good Care Recruitment service via www.hertsgoodcare.com

How can I have the most success with the Herts Good Care Recruitment service?

The first step to start using our service is for you to read through our advert guidance on [page 17](#) and put a strong advert together for your role. It is worth finding half an hour to sit down and create this well, the return on your time will come when you start to attract more suitable candidates.

Advertise via HCPA by visiting www.hertsgoodcare.com and clicking the green button 'Click here to advertise a job'

- 1. Prioritise candidates from HCPA:** These candidates have already been pre-screened using a values based approach. These candidates have chosen your role as the only one or one of a few jobs they would like to be put forward for out of the hundreds we support to recruit.
- 2. Be responsive:** Remember competition is high. You will need to review and contact candidates within 24 hours of receiving an application, or 48 hours maximum. Answer any candidate queries or questions from the HCPA team on the candidates behalf quickly.
- 3. Aim for a 7 day turn around:** This means that from the moment an application is received that you should complete the following within 1 week: contact the candidate to discuss the job; arrange an interview; hold the interview; make a job offer.
- 4. Be approachable:** Make sure that a candidate can get hold of you if they have any questions and that you answer any calls, texts or emails from them about their application. This will instil confidence in them that you care about them as a potential employee.

The Good Care Campaign

The Herts Good Care Campaign is an extension of the Herts Good Care Recruitment service and is key to us helping you have success. The campaign exists as we need to come together in Hertfordshire to reduce the staffing gap of 4000 people in Adult Social Care, a gap of 13% by reducing the negative stigma associated with the sector.

There are a variety of ways you can get involved in the Good Care Campaign throughout the year. In January and July each year we deliver focused campaigns, and you will hear from us at HCPA asking you to get involved. Regular updates will be made to our campaign webpage www.hertsgoodcare.com/campaign



How does getting involved in the Good Care Campaign help me to recruit staff?

1. Inspire the public to consider working in care by sharing your staff stories, events and activities, and good news stories
2. Advertise via www.hertsgoodcare.com and your jobs can be seen via the campaign
3. Sharing your photos, videos and stories provides the Herts Good Care Recruitment service with more to talk about with prospective candidates regarding your job and company
4. This helps with your online presence and brand awareness meaning people are more likely to talk about your company
5. The best way to inspire people is through real life stories. This can do more than just an advert on a national job board, it can reach those who share your vision and values

How does getting involved in the Good Care Campaign help me to retain staff?

1. Use the campaign as an opportunity to publicly thank your staff
2. Staff will feel valued if they have the chance to be involved
3. You may decide to share your employee of the month or team members career journeys giving them the chance to inspire more people to follow their path

#GoodCareMonth

FILTERING APPLICATIONS

What to look for in a CV

- 1. Contact Details/Location:** A candidate should provide an email and telephone number. Their location may determine how close they are to where they will be working too.
- 2. Profile/Opening:** Here a candidate should ideally mention an interest in working in care. If they are open to various sectors, then something that aligns with your values like a want to help people should be clear.
- 3. Full employment history:** A good CV will have no gaps in employment or will explain reasons for gaps in employment.
- 4. Time in each role:** If a candidate applying for a care/support role has not spent longer than a year in most jobs, it is worth asking their reasons for this and where they see themselves in 2 or 5 years' time. It could be as simple as they have just come out of education and only had short-term part-time roles.
- 5. Skills:** Are there any transferrable skills such as customer service or creativity skills, are they a good listener or very organised? These are just some key skills to discuss if you contact the applicant.
- 6. Education:** You may pay more attention to this section if there is a limited employment history, but you will mainly be looking for English GCSE or equivalent and any care related qualifications which are a bonus.

BUT....

Just because a candidate does not have one or more of the points above does not mean that they may not be suitable. These are just core aspects of a CV to look out for it you are filtering through many applications. Herts Good Care Recruitment will do this for you and screen those that may not have the best CVs but could still be a good fit for your role.

Cover Letters

A candidate may complete a cover letter to add to their application alongside their CV. If a candidate has personalised their cover letter to your company and job role this suggests they have put more thought into their application, may have researched your company prior and is serious in their job search.

How to approach CV concerns

Whether you want to ask about gaps in employment, why the candidate left a previous position or if a date does not seem to match up it is important that you approach this fairly.

Ask with care: Do not judge. There could be a valid reason and you do not want to make an applicant feel uncomfortable or you could lose out.

Do not discriminate: You must prevent discrimination by not making a judgement based on an applicant's: age; marital status; disability; race; religion; sexuality; criminal convictions; or any protected characteristics. You will only be permitted to ask about health or disability if needs of the job cannot be met without reasonable adjustments. You can find out more via [gov.uk/employer-preventing-discrimination/recruitment](https://www.gov.uk/employer-preventing-discrimination/recruitment)

CONTACTING APPLICANTS

Effective communication is not just about the words you say. In fact, the words are only 7% of your communication. Your tone of voice is 38% of your communication and Body Language makes up 55%!

How	When	Why
Phone	First contact Interview Arranging Interview Feedback Job Offer Pre-employment Checks	It will be a lot easier to build a rapport with the candidate via phone and ensure they maintain interest in your role.
Text	First Contact Interview Arranging Interview Reminder Interview Follow Up Job Offer Pre-Employment Checks	A quick text is the most easily accessible place for most people to grab an address, a date or time. You could also text a link to your website following your chat, or the available interview slots
Email	First Contact Interview Arranging Interview Reminder Interview Follow Up Job Offer Pre-Employment Checks	It is professional to back any conversation up with an email and this is how you will provide full interview confirmations, receive pre-employment documents and application forms and send additional reminders
Face to Face	Interview Pre-Employment Check	At interview stage a candidate can bring along a completed application form.
Video Call	Interview Pre-Employment Checks	It is ideal for a prospective employee to meet you face to face, but this is not always possible, particularly if there are restrictions in place due to COVID-19. Video calls are the next best method of interviewing.

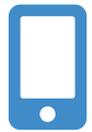
Top Tips:



Contact applicants within 24 hours, or a maximum of 48 hours. Aim to contact, arrange interview, interview, and offer the job within 1 week.



Allow for application forms to be completed after an interview has been arranged or even during interview. By waiting for a full application form you are prolonging the application process and the candidate could lose interest and choose another care provider. Remember, there are lots of job opportunities available that the applicant may have also applied for.



Always consider the three core points of contact with every contact: Call, Email and Text. If you do not get through via phone, email, and text for a higher chance of the applicant responding.



Every candidate you are interested in should receive an initial first call where you can chat further about the role, find out more about the applicant, and confirm their interest. This is your second chance to 'sell' your job.



When arranging an interview, ensure you provide a confirmation via email and ask for the candidate to reply to confirm attendance. Set up text reminders leading up to the interview.



Ask the candidate if there are any questions they have prior to interview. Being friendly and approachable will give them more confidence to attend your interview, resulting in fewer cancellations or no show.



Overall, you should take a caring approach with job applicants. Always bear in mind you could have competition and they could have other interviews lined up with other care providers.

INTERVIEWING

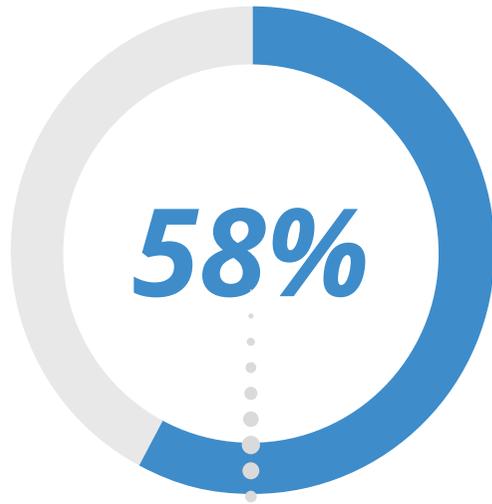
Interviews are your chance to find out about the candidate but also another chance to 'sell' your job and company to a potential candidate.

Tips for a successful interview

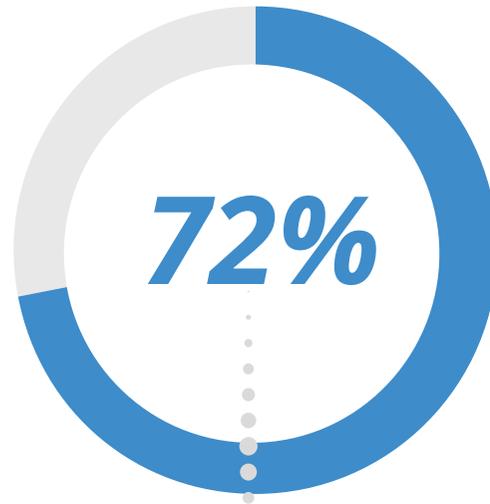
- 1. Effective communication leading up to interview:** Let the candidate know what to expect prior to interview and if there is anything they should prepare or research. Ensure you send an interview confirmation with this detail and send an additional reminder the day before
- 2. First impressions:** Don't underestimate the importance of making a good impression on the candidate too. Ensure your reception staff know you are interviewing so they too can be welcoming and expect the individual's arrival
- 3. Keep it professional yet friendly:** The candidate is likely to be nervous. To get the best out of them at their interview keep it professional yet friendly
- 4. Clear Interview Questions:** This will ensure you stay on track in interview and obtain all the information you need from the candidate to make an informed decision. It is helpful to have best practice answers to the questions you asked, so that you have something to compare to when reviewing how the interview went.
- 5. Continue to 'sell' this job to the candidate:** Just because someone is through the door for interview does not mean they do not have other opportunities. They will be looking to see if you are the right company with the right job for them too.
- 6. The interview should last 45 minutes to 1 hour:** 30 minutes or less does not give you or the candidate an accurate impression of each other. It also takes an individual an average of 20 minutes before they feel comfortable in an interview scenario
- 7. Involve staff:** You could have a staff member spend a couple of minutes telling the interviewee what their day-to-day job involves, it's always best for the staff they will be working with to directly promote the job and your company
- 8. Involve clients:** How an individual interacts with your clients is very important. A client could ask a couple of questions or tell the candidate what is important to them in the care and support they receive

Value Based Techniques

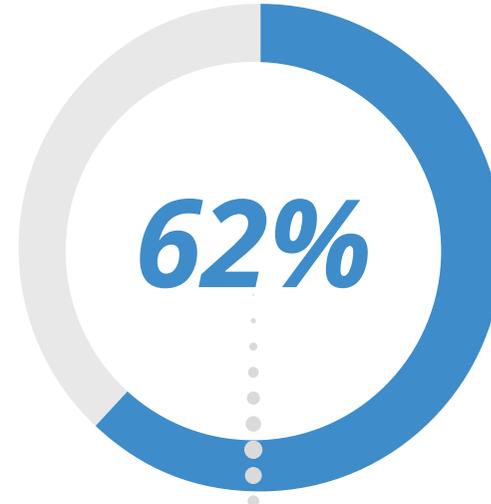
“An interview which seeks to understand candidates’ values and attitudes and how they apply them in work/ volunteering situations in order to assess whether they align with the values and expectations of the organisation.”



Agreed that staff recruited for values were better at developing the skills needed for their role



Agreed that staff recruited for values perform better than those recruited using traditional methods



Agreed that staff recruited for values have lower rates of sickness and absence

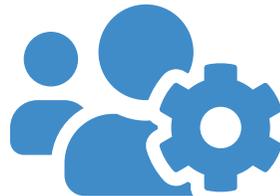


Estimated return for every £1 invested in a values based approach to recruitment

Employers report that values based recruitment:



Can result in a happier workforce



Offers a much more robust recruitment process



Can lead to a better quality of care



Can strengthen the development in the work place

What questions should I ask?

The questions you ask will depend on the type of service you run and who you support. However, there is some key information you should look to find out.

Always have in mind if this person is going to fit in with your organisation and has the right values and attitude for this kind of work.

Your questions should be open ended and not be 'yes or no' questions

- ? Why have you chosen to pursue work in Adult Social Care?
- ? What type of care and support might a client living with dementia need?
- ? Explain your main company values and then ask how would you live these values in your day to day work?
- ? How do you feel about providing personal care? What do you think you would do to maintain an individual's dignity and treat them with respect?
- ? If you thought a colleague was doing something wrong *can provide specific example*, what might you do?
- ? Why do you think confidentiality is important when working as a Care Assistant?
- ? Why have you chosen our organisation to work for as a Care Assistant?

FEEDBACK AND JOB OFFERS

You have now interviewed an individual and decided on whether you would like to employ them.

It is important to provide feedback whether a candidate is successful or not as this will affect your reputation as an organisation.

If a candidate is unsuccessful you can let them know what their strengths are and areas for improvement and even offer for them to apply in the future if you feel something may suit them at a later date.

If a candidate is successful you will need to offer the role as soon as you can after interview. Even at this stage a candidate could have other roles open to them. Offer via telephone and follow up with an offer letter via email.

The offer letter should be informative, should have an estimated start date, clarify the pay rates and provide an expectation for their first few days and weeks of employment.



PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

A great way of getting pre-employment checks started quickly is to have the candidate bring any relevant documentation to their interview. This means you do not need to wait for them to bring anything back to you before you can send off for a DBS.

The most common feedback from candidates who do not end up starting with a care provider after job offer is that there was a lack of contact or they didn't receive estimated start dates or updates.

Having an estimated start date subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks will provide reassurance. Even at this stage it is important to remember that applicants could choose to interview and accept a position elsewhere.

Sending a simple text or email when you are going through pre-employment checks will reassure your new employee too. As you will need to tick off each part of the pre-employment checks for compliance, use this as an opportunity to send a quick text/email reminder to your new employee that each part has been completed.

ONBOARDING YOUR STAFF

It is vital that you provide effective onboarding, inductions, and training so that the individual feels supported in their first few days and weeks.

An effective onboarding process will:

1. Increase employee engagement
2. Increase job satisfaction for employees
3. Ensure employees feel supported

***[Source](#)**

There are so many employers in Adult Social Care, at least 700 in Hertfordshire alone. Do not underestimate the power of an effective onboarding process to ensure that your new staff member is excited to work for you and doesn't want to change to the competitor down the road.

If you do not have onboarding processes, see our resources at the end of this guidance with a template you can use and adapt as required.

Day 1

Your new employee will continue to form opinions of their new employer on Day 1 of employment. Now that they have started you still need to provide them with the right support so that they feel valued and want to work for you.

Day 1 is when they will be meeting their manager properly for the first time, as well as the team and the clients. Your new employee is likely to feel a range of emotions on day 1 of their new job and so will feel more at ease with a clear plan for their day and week ahead.

Training

HCPA provides comprehensive Care Certificate training which covers all 15 standards.

During COVID-19 we have delivered this training online. In this difficult time, it will be almost impossible to give a new staff member the 'full care certificate experience' so why not look at how you can provide a 'stop-gap' measure. [Click here to find out more.](#)

Your candidate could even complete the knowledge part of the care certificate straight after interview offer while waiting for their pre-employment checks and start date. This does not have to hinder their day-to-day work at the moment, but do remember to come back to us when the crisis is over so we will give your staff member the full quality assured training package they deserve.

Inductions

Having a plan in place for your new starters first few months means it will be easier to ensure they get the full support and training required to carry out their role competently.

Your induction should cover:

1. Introductions to colleagues
2. Objectives
3. Policies and procedures
4. Behaviours Framework
5. Shadow Shifts
6. Training
7. Supervisions and Appraisals
8. Full expectations
9. How they will be supported

[An onboarding checklist can be downloaded under the resources at the end of this guide.](#)

Buddy System

When planning inductions and shadow shifts, you can match the new staff member with somebody who can be their 'buddy' for induction. Remember to ensure this is an experienced staff member who works alongside the new person as much as possible as they will also be able to check competencies following their training.

It is beneficial to do this because:

1. As a manager you may be extremely busy at this time and therefore this responsibility can be provided to another staff member
2. This will help with reducing unnecessary contact and maintain social distancing where possible by primarily interacting with one experienced staff member

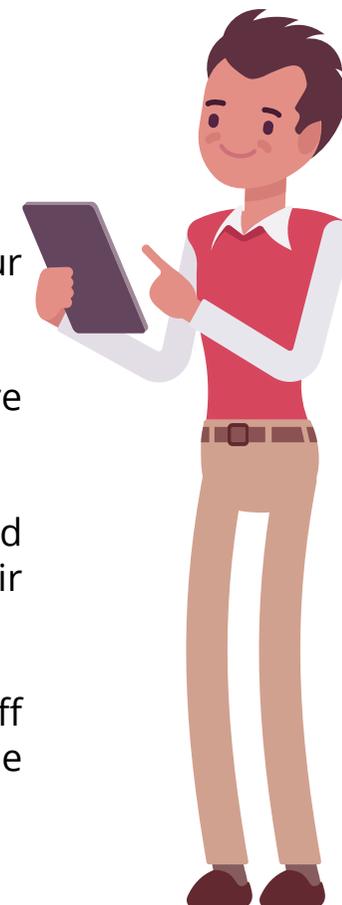
Meetings with your staff member

As part of your onboarding process, you should have both formal and informal meetings with your new staff member:

Formal: Monthly supervisions and probation review. This alongside competency sign off is where you can check your employee's competence to carry out their role.

Informal: Checking in to see how they are getting on, how they feel they are doing and if they need any additional support. This is where you may also check progress on their confidence within their role.

The informal meetings are just as important as the formal meetings. These will help your staff member feel valued and appreciated as they are given the time. This does not always need to be completed by the line manager, this could be delegated to a Team Leader or similar.



RETAINING STAFF

What matters to employees?

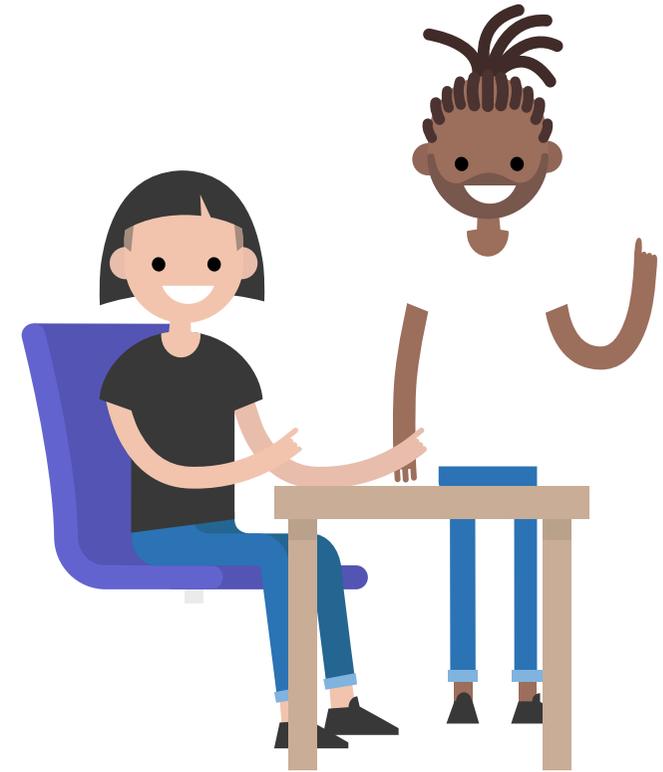
Having a good company culture, appreciating staff and a good leadership team are most important to care staff. Pay and Benefits become an issue if the other needs are not met.



Appreciating and Supporting your staff

Appreciating your staff makes them feel valued. There are many ways to show appreciation for your staff. Such as:

1. **Recognition scheme:** Employee of the month, annual bonus, public recognition for great work
2. **Development opportunities:** This does not need to be promotion but training for personal and professional growth
3. **Providing direct support:** Having a mentor assigned to staff members or having regular check ins with your staff to see if there is anything they need to do their job well and excel
4. **Thanking staff:** Show staff you appreciate them when they do something well by taking the time to thank them.



Involving the team

Just like it is important to involve clients in decisions about their care and support, your staff can also have a positive impact on this. Your frontline staff are the individuals who are with your clients more than anyone and their ideas and input will likely be of the highest value.

When having discussions about changes and improvements, this is another opportunity to ensure you are demonstrating your company values and create a culture where your staff are always striving to do better. As you want your staff to live your vision and values, make this integral to most communications.

For retaining staff, involving them in any changes means that they feel valued as an employee because their opinion also counts.

Adding responsibility

When choosing to give additional responsibility you should consider your employees strengths and what they enjoy most. You should also provide reasons for the additional tasks they will be completing: What will the outcome be and why is it important?

Not only is this an effective way of delegating tasks, freeing up your time to lead effectively, but it also means that employee will have more motivation and feel valued by being asked to do something important.

Additional responsibility is another method of development. Just because someone has some extra tasks it does not immediately mean their pay or position needs to change: It could be that they have a career goal and want to progress in the future, so giving them experience will help them with their professional and personal growth and show that you are taking their goals seriously.

Employees want to do well and excel at their job and appreciate being given additional responsibility.

Training and development

Each Care Assistant or Support Worker will be required to complete their Care Certificate and mandatory training, but what additional training and CPD do you offer?

Finding out from your staff what they enjoy most, what interests them most and what their strengths are will help you work out together what training and development is suitable for them. For example, you may have a team member who is extremely passionate about dementia care and wants to delve further into understanding this. You could support them with this interest by putting them on HCPA's Dementia Champion pathway or other Dementia specific training. You could also put them on the Train the Trainer course and they could become the designated individual to provide guidance to the rest of the team about dementia.

HCPA provides a variety of subject specific courses which you can find out more about via [hcpa.info/training/](https://www.hcpa.info/training/)

Upskilling your staff will help them to provide higher quality care and help you improve your overall service.

For the individual they will be valued and motivated to learn new skills to increase their confidence in their job.

Promote from within

Promoting from within means offering promotion to existing employees rather than hiring externally.

If employees see that you promote from within, they will see this as an opportunity for career development and be less likely to leave their job to work for a competitor.

It boosts morale and increases productivity. Your new employees will see this as a potential for their own growth and know that there is a possible career path if this is what they would like to pursue.

Promoting from within also makes for a smoother transition. If you were promoting an individual to a management or leadership position they will be best placed to lead by example as they would have experienced the same challenges your frontline care and support staff have faced. They will be able to empathise with the rest of the team and have a more in depth understanding of service needs and individual needs.



Supervisions and Appraisals

Effective performance management and improvement is one of the most important elements in the development, retention and motivation of your care staff.

For your organisation, supporting your staff member at regular intervals to understand the organisational values is extremely important, also that they are reminded which outcomes the organisation is working to and how they contribute to these: This will further encourage your staff member to stay with your organisation and continue their commitment to your work, working towards the same goals and values and keeping them motivated. Regular, good supervision and appraisals also:

- Supports your staff member to be clear about his or her responsibilities and accountabilities, to be competent in their roles
- Gives the opportunity to reflect on, analyse and evaluate practice
- Enables setting, agreeing and reviewing SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) goals and objectives
- Provides constructive feedback
- Promotes consistency of practice
- Recognises and values good practice
- Supports the health and wellbeing of your staff
- Supports people to understand their role in the social care workforce
- Reinforces clear professional boundaries
- Promotes self-confidence
- Identifies learning and development needs
- Identifies possible coaching and mentoring needs
- Develops team working
- Increases transparency and openness

The bottom line when it comes to staff retention is that the quality of the supervision an employee receives is critical. People leave managers and supervisors more often than they leave companies or jobs. Ensuring that you support, reward and recognise your staff in regular supervision and annual appraisal will help to retain your good staff.

At HCPA, we offer various fully funded leadership courses that include Supervision and Appraisal, such as courses on:

- Supervising staff – ‘An Introduction to Care Leadership ‘
- Coaching for high performance – ‘Leading a Workforce Coaching Strategy ‘
- Recruiting and retaining the right staff – ‘Leading a Compassionate Care Service ‘
- Building a brilliant team – ‘Performance Management ‘
- Managing the skills within the team – ‘Training Management ‘

[Visit our leadership courses page for more information.](#)

A ‘Well Led’ organisation will reduce your turnover of staff. It is vital that leaders of all levels are given the resources they need to not only do their job but also to reflect on their own practice. Having these skills will help you to engage, inspire and motivate staff. The courses within the ‘HCPA Leadership Suite’ are all designed to focus on the care sector and not just on theoretical models of leadership and the assignments are carefully put together to enable the leader to ‘try out’ a new skill.

There are courses for those new to leadership, such as team/shift leaders, and courses for senior managers. The peer learning opportunities in these courses provide added value to the learner by providing a safe space to discuss and plan new strategies. We want managers to be transformational with their teams and these courses are written in a way to enable this without feeling that aims are beyond tasks that can be carried out in a real working environment.

RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES

Onboarding Checklist

Please utilise the below onboarding checklist for your new starters if you wish. This is provided as a guide on what should be covered in the first few days, weeks, and month of employment.

TIME FRAME	ACTION	DATE COMPLETED
DAY 1	Uniform, PPE and other resources provided	
DAY 1	Initial managers meeting and tour	
DAY 1	Introduction to other team members and clients	
DAY 1	Required paperwork provided and completed: Payroll/Contract/Health declaration	
DAY 1	Go through policies and procedures	
DAY 1	Go through behaviours framework	
DAY 1	Meet Buddy	
WEEK 1	Shadow Shifts/Training	
WEEK 1	End of week informal catch up with line manager	
WEEK 2	Shadow Shifts/Training	
WEEK 2	End of week informal catch up with Line Manager	
WEEK 3	Sign off training competencies	
WEEK 3	Start on rota	
WEEK 3	End of week informal catch up with line manager	
1 MONTH	Supervision	
2 MONTHS	Supervision	
3 MONTHS	Supervision and Probation Review	
3 MONTHS	Probation Letter advising if employment continue, ends or probation extended	

Resource - Pre-employment Contact Checklist

ACTION	NEW STARTER CONTACTED Y/N	TYPE OF CONTACT REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE PERSON FOR CONTACTING
Job offer Made and accepted	Y / N	Phone	
Provider offer Letter to be sent including proposed start date subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks	Y / N	Email Offer letter	
Request for any additional information such as references if not yet obtained	Y / N	Email alongside above offer letter	
Receive application form and all required details	Y / N	Email confirmation	
Receive DBS	Y / N	Text/Email notification	
Receive references	Y / N	Text/Email notification	
Receive health questionnaire	Y / N	Text/Email notification	
Confirm start date based on pre-employment checks	Y / N	Call and Email with start time, location and anything required to bring along	



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