

Attract

Attracting staff in a competitive environment during a digital revolution can feel overwhelming. It can be confusing what methods of recruitment best suit your organisation and difficult to stay ahead of emerging trends.

From profession-specific videos shared on social media, to hospital open evenings and celebratory events, there is lots that can be done to raise the profile of your organisation and the career opportunities on offer.

In this section you can find a range of attraction methods along with resources and leading examples.

NHS Employers facilitates a recruitment exchange network for recruitment leads in the NHS. The network is a space for recruitment and resourcing managers in the NHS to share challenges and solutions with one another, test ideas and form a virtual support group. This network predominantly focuses on domestic recruitment and improving recruitment processes. You can request to join the network by emailing workforcesupply@nhsemployers.org.

NHSE/I also has a collection of good practice case studies on recruiting HCSWs on the HCSW Future NHS collaboration platform.

We are the NHS

We are the NHS is a national recruitment campaign run by NHS England and Improvement. Images and videos to support your recruitment activities are available to use and download on the campaign hub.



How is your trust perceived by your local community and beyond?

Is there more that than can be done to improve the reputation of your organisation?

What is your staff survey telling you?

What do prospective candidates think of your organisation at interview?

What do staff get in other trusts that they might be missing from yours?

Have you analysed the data from your stay and exit interviews recently?

Being a leading employer

To compete for talent in your local community, your organisation will need to be visible. When attracting the best candidates, you need to be able to separate your organisation from the rest. Jobseekers are no different to any other consumer – they are looking for the best deal. We know this means different things for different people, so it's important to know your audience.

From a good reputation and culture, a strong health and wellbeing approach, to communicating your reward package effectively, individuals need to understand what is available to them both within the organisation and in the local area such as schools and transport links. Having a strong employer brand is incredibly important in a competitive environment.

The benefits of a strong employer brand include:

- increased awareness of your organisation and vacancies

- enhanced image in the local community and beyond
- reduced recruitment costs
- pride amongst your staff
- improved retention rates.

Read our case study on the innovative approach taken by King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. They partnered with a recruitment agency to create an award winning recruitment campaign built on extensive staff engagement which put King's staff at the front and centre of their campaign.

Shared learning from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT) has an engagement project that is committed to improving the employee journey. Their dedicated careers website forms part one of their journey, acting as more than just a jobs board by describing 'The Leeds Way' through video employee profiles and interactive content. It showcases the city of Leeds, information on open evenings, work experience, volunteering and apprenticeships.

Other trusts with their own careers websites include West Midlands Ambulance Service, The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

Best of both worlds

Six employers in the Northamptonshire region, including NHS and private healthcare providers, a university and a healthcare charity, have developed the best of both worlds microsite as part of a campaign to attract new recruits to live and work in the area. On the microsite you can find information about each organisation, a list of their current vacancies as well as other key information on the local area such as housing, sports and entertainment.

Use social media

Correct use of social media can help you to strengthen your employer brand and attract quality talent to your organisation. Social media platforms are informal and can help you to reach out to an audience who may not be aware of vacancies through other routes, and in some cases may not even be actively searching but thinks of your organisation when they are ready for a career move.

According to Statista, a provider of market and consumer data, 71.64 per cent of the UK uses social media. USwitch also claims that the average UK citizen spends 109 minutes a day on social media.

The next generation of NHS staff will have grown up using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. More NHS organisations than ever before are using these platforms, not only to recruit but to actively engage with the community to help inspire the future workforce.

Read our case study on how Blood Cancer UK increased the diversity of applications by advertising jobs on LinkedIn. The case study explains how the organisation increased its reach and how it used the platform to showcase its organisational culture - something existing staff had said was a major positive in working for the organisation.

For other tips to help you get started, visit the NHS Employers using social media in recruitment page.

Social media top tips

Develop and refresh your social media strategy – include a social media calendar.

Share updates consistently and regularly but don't overdo it.

Post eye-catching images and engaging videos.

Keep your posts brief and concise - research shows posts with fewer characters attract more views.

Use your existing workforce

When thinking about attraction, your existing staff are ideally placed to talk about their careers, your organisation and why the NHS is a great place to work. They could even help you attract new candidates, including family members, to apply.

Health Education England runs a health ambassadors programme which encourages people studying and working in healthcare to volunteer one hour per year to speak in schools about their roles or take part in careers events.

Inspiring the Future has an online matchmaking platform to connect schools and colleges with appropriate volunteers from a range of sectors and professions that match their requirements. There are currently more than 41,000 volunteers registered, and your staff can join them to help inspire young people. If you'd like to share how it works, share this short video with your staff.

This report from the Nuffield Trust: Attracting more people into mental health nurse education, commissioned by NHS Employers and

Shared learning from Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust

Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust has adapted its recruitment strategy to the digital era. With the use of a digital advertising agency, they built an effective social media platform to attract band 5 registered nurses and students to the organisation. Their Facebook campaign had an average audience of over 70,000 people each month which created a database of over 300 people who had interest in joining the trust. Through targeted messages and engaging content, the trust has nearly doubled the number of people attending events and increased the number of student nurses recruited each year.

Do you encourage your existing staff to spread the word and become health ambassadors within your organisation?

Could you use inspiring the future or other similar schemes to elevate the workforce?

Profession-specific videos

One way to help highlight your organisation to potential employees is by showcasing some of your current workforce. Here are some leading examples of trusts using videos and their staff to highlight the benefits of working for them.

Be a Greater Manchester Nurse

Be a Greater Manchester Nurse is a campaign led by Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership showcasing what it means to be a nurse in the Manchester area. The video celebrates the NHS as well as the nursing role and is inspired by artists from the area.

Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Aintree Hospital has produced a social media friendly and engaging video that features some of their nurses describing what it's like to work at the trust.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust showcases why its nurses choose to develop their career at the trust in its Not Just a Job campaign.

Open days and events

Open days, recruitment fairs and exhibitions are a fantastic way to attract and inspire young people and the local community to think about a career in the NHS. You can set up a stall in your hospital foyer with your staff, who can share their career journeys and answer any questions.

Many trusts run open days during celebrations weeks such as Healthcare Science Week.

Recruitment fairs and exhibitions, such as the yearly Big Bang fair, is a fantastic way of targeting a big audience and promoting your organisation as an employer of choice. Coordinate your attendance at these events with neighbouring health and social care organisations to prevent duplication and reduce resource allocations.

Celebratory weeks

Every year, dedicated healthcare celebrations and awareness weeks provide a fantastic opportunity for you to raise the profile of NHS careers.

One of these is Healthcare Science Week in March, when organisations across the country celebrate healthcare science and the various routes into the profession.

Find out what has taken place previously and how you can get involved in the next celebrations.

- Healthcare Science week
- National Apprenticeship week
- National Careers Week

View more days and events on our calendar of national campaigns.

Shared learning from Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust

Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust has built on its successful nursing open days with a new bus tour. Individuals are taken on a tour of three of the 108 trust sites, following a route designed to showcase what Leeds has to offer. Aimed specifically at first and second year nursing students, the tour aims to attract individuals into community nursing roles. The tour involves various interactive sessions and gives students the opportunity to speak to the preceptorship lead, newly qualified nurses and members of the multidisciplinary team.

Rotational roles

Rotational roles are a great recruitment incentive, particularly for newly qualified staff who are keen to expand their skills, knowledge and experience. Rotational roles can be offered within an organisation or collaboratively across trusts in your region. Not only can they help you strengthen your employment offer, they also facilitate shared learning between departments and organisations, upskill staff and help with retention.

Offering staff routes to develop their careers in other parts of your organisation can be a great method for attracting and retaining your workforce. Often referred to as internal transfer schemes, these arrangements can allow staff to make a sideward move into a department they are interested in, allowing them to expand their knowledge, skills and experience – without the burden of re-applying for a role and going through a recruitment process.

"I have found that it's so beneficial to have knowledge from other areas and fresh ideas and new ways of working – it only enhances your nursing care."

Shared learning from Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

As part of its preceptorship initiatives, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust has developed an 18-month to two year rotational programme for all band 5 nurses. The programme allows nurses to carry out either six or nine-month placements within different areas to give them opportunities to expand their knowledge and experience within different areas of nursing. Nurses can consider different roles, matching potential career pathways with their individual wants, needs and skillsets.

Flexible working

The UK workforce is now more diverse than ever, reflecting changes in society and demographics of the population. Flexible working opportunities and predictability of shifts can support the delivery of improved service outcomes, providing benefits for the organisation, individual and the patient. It can provide an attractive offer to staff, many of whom have varying commitments which can make it difficult working

certain hours. By offering flexible working, you can attract a pool of applicants which may otherwise have not been attracted to roles in your organisation. We are aware that it may be difficult to offer flexible working patterns in certain circumstances. To help you work through common challenges, we have published a set of scenarios that offer potential barriers to flexible working and the solutions to these.

Our flexible working guidance can help you to embed flexible working for nurses in your organisation.

Shared learning from Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has introduced a new flexi model which allows staff to have an annualised hours contract with greater flexibility in the number of hours they carry out each month. Members of staff will give their availability six weeks in advance and can be deployed to any site within their allocated zone. This model is an attractive package for staff and gives them the opportunity to have a stable monthly income. The trust has already seen improvements in retention and provides consistency in the continuity of care for patients.

Communicate reward

Communicating the whole reward package is a key part of recruitment. Our webpage and infographic show how using the right technology can help you promote the benefits of working for your organisation to potential new employees and existing staff. You can also use our reward communications guide to help you plan and communicate your organisations' reward package to staff. Line managers also play an

important role in communicating reward benefits to staff, our webpage provides ways to involve them in developing your reward strategy.

experience. Joining TREN can help you to develop your local reward package and strategy by gaining inspiration and ideas from other organisations. For example read about the major benefits Sherwood Forest NHS Foundation Trust saw from using their benefits package as a key part of their recruitment and retention campaign.

The NHS Pension Scheme continues to be one of the most comprehensive and generous schemes in the UK and is a key part of the reward offer for NHS employees. It is a valuable recruitment and retention tool for employers to use.

Our NHS Pension Scheme poster communicates the value of the scheme and shows six of the key features that staff told us are most important to them. Including the poster in job adverts is an easy visual way to promote the scheme benefits to potentials new employees. Use the resource to support your conversations with staff about pensions and to help you explain the benefits of being a member of the scheme.

Find more reward resources and how to develop a reward strategy on the NHS Employers website.

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust used reward within its recruitment strategy to ease workforce supply pressures and reduce vacancy rates. They used several approaches which included recommend a friend, supporting staff in relocation, recognising achievements and promoting their reward offer on NHS jobs which has resulted in a four per cent reduction in nursing vacancies and a reduction in staff turnover.

Careers resources

resources including infographics and posters to help employers inspire the future workforce.

Health Careers also runs an annual Step into the NHS campaign which provides 12-14-year olds with careers information as part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. They can also support you to offer work experience to people from underrepresented communities. Access their smart guide.

The Greater Manchester NHS Careers and Engagement Hub

The Greater Manchester NHS Careers and Engagement Hub has been designed to improve the information and support available to people who are looking for career opportunities in the NHS in the Manchester region. The website provides a base for learners, professionals and staff from across the NHS to access helpful resources and learn about opportunities they can get involved in.

Career navigation

In Kent, Surrey and Sussex (KSS), career navigator roles are being developed to support unsuccessful clinical and nonclinical support worker applicants across health and social care. The roles, funded by Health Education England KSS, has been designed to maintain applicant interest in these careers and support them to gain the skills and knowledge required to fulfil the roles.

The navigators will spend time with the individuals to determine why they were unsuccessful and then engage with them to offer support and put in place any intervention required such as coaching, training or personal development.

What do you do to support applicants?

Is providing support something that might be valuable in your organisation?

Why not start the conversation with your senior leadership team?

Employability programmes

Employability programmes support individuals to help them secure employment. Many people who are unemployed face difficulties and barriers when seeking employment. The reasons for this are quite complex and might include:

- low confidence and self-esteem
- gaps on their CV
- negative work experiences and lack of recent work
- out-of-date core employability skills
- stigma around mental health.

Find out about the approach Birmingham Children's Hospital has taken to supporting young people on their career journeys in its Aspire programme.

Attraction top tips

1. Ensure your website is engaging and provides individuals with up to date, concise and inspiring information about your organisation and this surrounding area.
2. Provide clear information on the various opportunities and routes into your organisation.

3. Consider an employability programme and how you can support people into your organisation.
4. Describe your reward package and the benefits you provide.
5. Use social media to promote your organisation and inform the community about open days, recruitment opportunities and how individuals, schools, colleges and universities can get involved.
6. Consider creating engaging resources to inspire your audience such as profession-specific videos which describe the career journey and inspire people to work for you.
7. Encourage your current staff to spread the word about the NHS and the range of opportunities available.