

# Recruit and retain young people toolkit

March 2023

# About us

NHS Employers is the employers' organisation for the NHS in England. We support workforce leaders and represent employers to develop a sustainable workforce and be the best employers they can be. We also manage the relationships with NHS trade unions on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

# Introduction

This toolkit contains advice, tools and resources that will help you to attract and recruit young people, support them to stay in their roles and become a valuable asset to your organisation and the wider health and social care workforce.

The toolkit is aimed at employers and managers with responsibility for recruitment and retention activity in health and social care organisations and can be used alongside our [inspire, attract and recruit toolkit](#) to support your wider workforce supply.

The toolkit has been commissioned by The Prince's Trust, with input from NHS England, Skills for Care, NHS organisations and young people who have found employment in the sector with the support of The Prince's Trust.

## How to use this toolkit

Use the +chapters navigation menu at the bottom of your window or click on a chapter on the right hand side of the page to explore the different stages of the recruitment journey and how they can be adapted for young people.

## Why focus on young people?

The jobs market has continued to recover from the effects of COVID-19, with the most recent youth unemployment rate now below pre-pandemic levels and an increase in the number of young people in full-time education. However, between July to

September 2021 there were still 689,000 young people in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). There are concerns that this may lead to long-term 'scarring' where young people who are unemployed are likely to continue to experience unemployment throughout their lives as well as poor mental and physical health.

With an ageing workforce across health and social care, there is a need to offer targeted support and build sustainable pathways into jobs and careers for disadvantaged young people who may be NEET and are who are unaware of the opportunities available to them in the sector.



## **The Prince's Trust health and social care programme**

The Prince's Trust is working in partnership with the Department for Health and Social Care and Health Education England, to support young people from a range of backgrounds, including those from lower income backgrounds or those affected by long term unemployment, to find good work in the health and social care sector.

The core offers of the programme include virtual or face-to-face pre-employment sessions which are tailored to fulfil the vacancy needs of each NHS organisation and give young people a real understanding of the sector. Each young person is supported by a mentor as they go through the programme and start employment, helping to retain them in the workforce.

# Senior leadership buy-in

Organisations that have successfully recruited young people tell us they did this with the support of their senior leaders. Here are some top tips based on good practice collated from our networks.

## Set the scene for your senior leaders

- Demonstrate how recruiting young people links to national priorities. For example, the NHS People Plan contains several actions to grow and diversify the workforce and develop career pathways for local people.
- Link to future workforce plans so that you can demonstrate a recruitment pathway.

## Use available funding incentives and expertise

- Highlight the funding incentives available to build sustainable pathways into employment and ongoing training and development for young people entering your workforce. For example, Kickstart, apprenticeships, traineeships and T levels.
- Use the expertise of organisations who work with young people such as The Prince's Trust to connect with disadvantaged young people in your community and open up routes into the service to attract young people who would not normally consider a career in health and social care.

## Use available data to review your local approach

- What is your trust vacancy rate?
- What is the age profile of your workforce (under 25 and over 55)?
- How do you currently recruit young people? What works well and what could be improved to reach those who are underrepresented in your current workforce?
- Consider your local youth unemployment rate and the number of young people unemployed or NEET in your local authority.

## Celebrate your successes

- Recognise and celebrate the good work already achieved. Communicate successes with senior leaders and the impact this is having within your team
- East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust has partnered with The Prince's Trust since 2017 and embedding the programme required board level support. Executive sponsors at board level participate in the end of programme celebration event which highlights the importance of the programme to the wider organisation, this also highlights the outcomes to the board.

## Identify and engage a board level champion

- Find a member of your board to champion your aims with other board members. Use the below key messages to help tailor your information so that it is relevant to specific senior leaders and assists their priorities or focus areas.

## Use real life stories

- Where possible bring the voice of young people to your board. The Prince's Trust supported Thomas to secure a role in the NHS and this has transformed his life. Watch him shares his powerful story in this video.

## Key messages



Senior leader	Key message
Chief executive	<p>As an anchor institution, working with local partners to provide career pathways to young people will improve their life opportunities.</p> <p>Employing local young people enhances our reputation as an employer with strong community links and could help improve staff retention and loyalty.</p>
Director of finance	<p>Using agency and other temporary workers to fill vacancies is costly. Developing a talent pipeline, using available funding incentives and the apprenticeship levy can help to 'grow your own' future workforce.</p> <p>Long-term investment in pre-employment programmes and apprenticeships can lead to improved retention, increased productivity, and reduced sickness absence.</p>
Director of workforce and organisation development	<p>Entry-level roles and apprenticeships can support workforce strategies and address significant supply challenges, meeting skills gaps with new roles.</p> <p>Opportunity to highlight variety of apprenticeships and career pathways available in the NHS.</p>
Director of estates and facilities (E&F)	<p>Due to an ageing workforce, there is a need to promote the wide range of roles and career pathways available in E&amp;F.</p> <p>Local young people can access careers they may not have previously considered or been aware of and can develop a long-term careers.</p>
Director of nursing	<p>There are approximately 39,000 vacancies for nursing roles in England, leading to potential burnout, poor staff engagement and increased turnover of the nursing workforce.</p> <p>Pre-employment programmes can provide a sustainable long-term approach to addressing nursing shortages. There are variety of nursing career pathways available using the apprenticeship route.</p>
Chair and non-executive directors	<p>Developing robust workforce supply pipelines must be a board level priority.</p> <p>Supporting local young people into work will improve the health and wellbeing of the community you serve and lead to better patient outcomes as the workforce mirrors the patient population.</p>
Chief operating officer	<p>Local young people can help to fill workforce gaps and ultimately improve patient</p>

Inclusive recruitment will lead to a diverse workforce offering joined up, personalised care.

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Medical director	Using apprenticeships to upskill the existing medical workforce will help to 'grow your own' medical workforce and increase the access to quality care for patients.
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# Getting managers onboard

To embed an encouraging and supportive culture for young people, it is essential that your managers and departmental leads are engaged, and that support is visible from ward to board.



## The benefits

It is important that managers understand the potential benefits, skills and abilities that young people can bring. Use the information below in manager training sessions or briefings.

Young people:

- can boost morale and bring new energy and motivation to the team
- have fresh new ideas and ways of working

- can be eager to learn new skills
- have different and unique skills, including digital skills and help existing staff to become more digitally confident
- can be moulded to meet team and skills needs
- can help the wider team to grow and develop, through peer support or buddying for example
- can help you prevent team shortages in the future
- can reward you with employee loyalty if you invest in their training and development from day one.

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“The Prince’s Trust not only provides local young people with exciting opportunities to experience working life, but it enables organisations and teams such as ours to broaden our recruitment horizons and benefit from an injection of youthful energy. The enthusiasm from our recent intake has been tangible and quite inspiring, and in patient services we actively look forward to meeting each new group so we can find our stars of the future.”

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Andrew Taylor, Patient Services Manager at East Lancashire Hospitals Trust.

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Listen to Lisa's story as part of our latest podcast, featuring [@RWT\\_NHS](#) discussing how they have created employment opportunities for young people. [#OurNHSPeople](#) [#NHS](#) [#InclusiveRecruitment](#)  
Full podcast - <https://t.co/JdDIS8MkNW>  
[pic.twitter.com/QSrHUnKvz2](https://t.co/JdDIS8MkNW)  
— NHS Employers (@NHSEmployers) October 11, 2021

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## Useful links

- [Business case for supporting a partnership with The Prince's Trust | NHS Employers](#)
- [Businesses Must Be There For Young People](#)
- [Why I chose to work in the NHS: Youth recruitment at South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust](#)

# Engaging with young people

Young people are ready and waiting in your local community but are you visible as an employer for them?

## Benefits of directly engaging with young people

- Showcase your organisation as an employer of choice, committed to improving their opportunities.
- Educate them about the range of jobs available in health and social care and the career pathways available.
- Widen your talent pool to those who may have thought working in health and social care wasn't an option for them.
- Connect with and grow a workforce that is representative of the community it serves.

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36 per cent of children from as young as seven years old, base their career aspirations on people they know. Consider how you can engage with young people, both before and when they reach employment age.

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Here are some ways to connect with local young people to make sure that your organisation is seen as an attractive and inclusive employer for them:

- Establish a health ambassadors programme where existing staff volunteer to share their experience and knowledge with young people in schools, colleges and local communities to inspire the next generation of healthcare workers.
- Raise your profile in the media by sharing good news stories about your organisation and workforce. This will help to promote your organisation's culture, values and benefits. East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust hold celebration events that books internal and external publicity of the success of its pre-employment programme for young people.
- Link with education providers to showcase job roles and work experience opportunities to students at careers events who may become your future workforce.
- Work in partnership with local organisations who support young people, including those from disadvantaged groups, to widen your talent pool and ensure young people can access roles in your organisation. These can include local education and training providers, JobCentre Plus, charities, and local community groups. Their insight and expertise will ensure you reach young people who are in care or care leavers, unemployed, disabled, young carers, not in education, employment or training (NEET), members of the BAME community.
- Use communications channels for recruitment that are relevant to your target audience, such as social media, online job sites and NHS Jobs. Videos are a fantastic way to engage with young people and can be less time consuming than delivering face to face event.
- West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust run a 24-hour take-over of the trust Instagram account to focus solely on recruitment by sharing videos and facilitating live question and answer sessions. The trust created a QR code for the side of their ambulances to link to their website and raise awareness of the variety of job opportunities available in the

service.

- Mandy Buckley, Prince's Trust recruitment project manager at Mid-Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, uses social media accounts specifically set up for recruitment purposes. Here she can use more informal language than that used by the trust's communications team and feedback suggests this approach has been well received by users. To find out more, see [Social media tips to attract young staff](#).
- Social media is a useful way to connect with young people but not everyone has the ability to connect to the internet and go online. Consider your organisation's plan to reach young people in [digital poverty](#).

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"Care4Notts have started using TikTok and it was incredibly well accessed!"

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Emma Cross, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- Ensure your [information is accessible](#) to young people with learning disabilities or have difficulty with reading, you can use easy read formats to ensure your written information is simple and easy to understand.
- Promote training and development opportunities. This will attract and retain a young workforce and shows that you are committed to developing them. [Our infographic](#) shows the different career pathways three young people have taken since completing a Prince's Trust pre-employment programme.



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The Prince's Trust can help you to reach local young people looking for employment by using their social media channels, operations teams and partnerships with Job Centre Plus.

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For those with access to the NHS Futures platform, we would encourage you watch [this webinar](#) offered by the [NHS Universal Family programme](#) team focused on how employers can create a sustainable care leavers programme within the NHS. This webinar focuses on how to support care leavers with applying to vacancies, the barriers to access for care leavers and how widening participation benefits the wider workforce.

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust holds live chats online which are dedicated to promoting a specific role within the organisation. Each chat includes a 45-60-minute presentation about the role and minimum requirements, followed by a 30-minute live question and answer session. These are promoted via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



Coventry and Warwickshire  
Partnership NHS Trust hired staff  
specifically to support new starters  
with their paperwork in the relaxed  
and informal setting of a café.



Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust engages with young people in the local community by:



- working with local schools on curriculum planning.
- supporting their workforce ambassadors by giving them protected time to visit schools and deliver presentations about their jobs in the NHS.
- working with local colleges to increase the range of healthcare-related courses to keep training opportunities and work placements within their geographical area.
- working with its local public health team to understand specific population trends and setting recruitment targets to increase diversity.
- working in partnership with Project Choice and Health Education England to recruit 10 people with learning disabilities as interns each year.



## Useful links

- [Health Education England NHS ambassadors programme](#)
- [Skills for Care Care...Ambassadors](#)

# Pathways into work

There are lots of different ways to bring young people into your organisation that will benefit them, your organisation and your teams. There is no one-size-fits-all pathway and which one you choose will depend on your organisation's needs.

Pathways can also link together so that young people are given the best possible chance of success and your organisation can benefit from funding incentives.

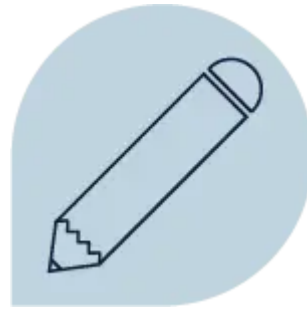
Use this chart to work out your needs and which process can align to it.

I want to...	Best option	Benefits for my organisation	Benefits for young people	Link with
recruit to a specific role	Direct recruitment	Bring in new and unique talents	Introduce fresh ideas and grow capacity in your teams	Clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships available from levels 2-8
develop a pathway from volunteering into paid roles	Volunteering	Showcases the breadth of roles available	Young people gain new experiences and skills as they become part of your teams	Pre-employment programmes, traineeships, apprenticeships
widen the talent pool for future recruitment	Work experience	Promotes your team and organisation as a great place to work	Staff can develop mentoring skills. Young people gain experience to support future job applications, including a referee.	Pre-employment programmes, traineeships, apprenticeships
support groups that are under-represented in our workforce to reflect the diversity of our community	Supported internship	Opens opportunities to young people who would benefit from additional help to access your opportunities	Young people with a learning difficulty, disability or autism gain the skills, confidence and qualifications necessary to step into paid work	Move into entry-level roles or supported apprenticeships
help local young people develop their employability skills	Pre-employment programmes	Opportunity to develop a skilled workforce and meet immediate or future recruitment needs	Young people become familiar with working in a team, building their confidence and skills which can help to a find job	Traineeships, T-levels, apprenticeships

retain young people who are motivated to work in my organisation but are not ready for work or an apprenticeship	Traineeships	Grows your talent pipeline and supports retention	Young people can develop their skills and experience to apply for apprenticeships	Apprenticeships
grow our own talent to meet current and future workforce gaps	Apprenticeships	Provide an alternative pathway for young people who might be discouraged by traditional recruitment methods	Existing staff can mentor apprentices, passing on vital knowledge and experience	Clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships available from levels 2-8
offer an alternative education route	T-Levels	Engage with a new talent pipeline and attract young people into hard to fill roles	Prepares young people to join the sector by offering industry placements for T Level students	Move into entry-level roles or onto level three apprenticeships
address local graduate unemployment	Internships	Tap into new talent from local universities who may not have considered a career in the sector	Young people can develop skills and experience to take into future roles	Move into entry-level roles or apprenticeships

## The 'doers' at Dartford & Gravesham

During the pandemic, Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust created an innovative way to recruit young people into their organisation and address their staff shortages.



The chief executive realised that some staff knew local 18-26-year-olds who were unexpectedly living at home due to the closure of universities and colleges. She asked staff to become 'sponsors' for young people that they knew personally to come and help at the hospital and join the staff bank.

Their role within the trust was to support wherever help was needed. Some of their jobs included deliveries to wards, cleaning equipment in key areas, staff wellbeing and much more.

There was no official application process although DBS checks were carried out. No qualifications were needed for these band two-level tasks. Departments would send requests for help to the Wellbeing Team one week in advance, stating the duration and type of task required. The team would then put shifts out via their bank system for young people to come to complete the work. All communication was delivered by WhatsApp. The 'Doers' service was used seven days a week, including bank holidays and Christmas.

## Outcome

30 young people responded to the advert in the first cohort and 24 young people responded in the second cohort. The scheme was initially funded through additional COVID-19 funding, however it has been so successful that the trust has moved away from the sponsorship model to recruiting five permanent 'doer' jobs and one band three 'doer supervisor' role.



The trust currently has 30 'doers' on the staff bank, some of which are seasonal workers for example covering Christmas and summer holidays, 11 are regular and six have gone on to have full time careers in the NHS, in areas such as A&E, finance, procurement and the wards.

One young person said that she would 'never had known the variety of careers in the NHS without this opportunity.'

Leslieann Osborn, director of wellbeing and engagement at Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust said: "It is a 'win-win' model which has sparked a lot of interest from the doers, in terms of exploring a career in the NHS. I don't know how the trust would have got through it (the pandemic) without them."

[Read more about the 'doers' on the trust's website.](#)

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is exploring the development of non-clinical internships which could offer undergraduate students the opportunity to undertake paid, 12-month work placements in finance, human resources, marketing and digital teams. It is hoped that this would increase recruitment in these departments.



## Useful links

- [NHS Employers Prince's Trust career pathways infographic](#)
- [NHS Employers Inclusive recruitment podcast](#)
- [NHS Employers Routes into the NHS infographic](#)

- [NHS Employers Your future nurses infographic](#)
- [NHS Employers Using apprenticeships to support workforce supply infographic](#)
- [NHS Employers T Level industry placements and getting started](#)
- [Health Education England Work experience resource toolkits](#)
- [Health Education England Preparation for work directory](#)
- [Skills for Care Seeing potential: widen your talent pool](#)
- [Health Careers Step into the NHS](#)
- [Pears Foundation young people volunteering programmes](#)
- [Helpforce volunteering](#)

# Key facts about employing young people

Information and guidance to help you overcome some perceived barriers to bringing young people into your workforce.



## Identity checks

**Fact: Young people may not have a passport or driving licence, and some might not be able to afford the application for one.**

If young people are unable to provide any form of photographic personal identity, employers can request a passport sized photograph which is counter-signed on the back by a person of some standing in the community. [See the government's advice](#) for a list of recommended persons of some standing in the community.

Young people can also show an identity card carrying the PASS accreditation logo (UK, including Channel Islands and Isle of Man), such as a UK Citizen ID card or a Connexions card (must be valid and in-date). They can apply online and there is a £15 fee for a non-urgent request and a £30 fee for an urgent request.

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The Prince's Trust Development Awards supports those aged 16-30 to progress and can help to cover the cost of these documents. To enquire about eligibility, or to refer a young person, please contact [DAGM@princes-trust.org.uk](mailto:DAGM@princes-trust.org.uk)

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**Fact: There are other ways to confirm proof of address if a young person does not receive utility bills**

Where young people are genuinely unable to provide proof of their current address, employers may wish to seek confirmation from an electoral register that the young person lives at the claimed address by contacting the relevant local authority. See page 12 of the identity checks standard (pdf).

For young people who have no fixed abode, we recommend that you refer individuals to the charity body Crisis who can help them to obtain a copy of their birth certificate or apply for a passport.

Page 13 of the identity checks standard also contains information on acceptable document for young people who are in or have recently left full-time education (16-19 year olds).

## Criminal record checks

**Fact: Employers don't need to carry out a DBS check for a work experience placement.**

As young people on work experience must be supervised at all times, they do not need to complete a DBS check.

**Fact: DBS application forms are often returned due to missing information or mistakes.**

This [guide for applicants](#) can be sent out to all candidates as part of the recruitment pack.

This [quick guide to DBS checks](#) aims to improve understanding of the DBS checking system. It is a useful resource for candidates during the recruitment process. The guide is also available as an [animation](#).

**Fact: DBS checks can take time to complete, which can lead to long delays for young people, who may drop out of the process.**

Not all NHS positions will be eligible for a DBS check. The need and level of check required depends on the activities and type of patient access the person will have in any given role. [Use our DBS check eligibility tool](#) to determine whether or not an individual is eligible for a DBS check. You can also find more information on whether or not a role is eligible for a criminal record check by using our document [role eligibility for DBS checks](#).

## Employment history and reference checks

**Fact: This may be a young person's first job application, so they don't have any previous employment history.**

Employers can seek additional character or personal reference to build up a picture of a young person's reliability, skills and experiences. This is also useful to support an application if the

young person has a previous criminal record history. Character and personal references can be sought from personal acquaintances that are not related to the applicant, and who does not hold any financial arrangements with that individual. See page 7 of the [employment history and reference checks standard](#).

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At The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, if a young person moves into a role within the trust following completion of the pre-employment programme, their manager from their work placement can provide human resources with an additional reference, if needed.

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Read our guidance on good employment practice when employing people under the age of 18 years old: [Busting myths on recruiting under 18s into the NHS](#).

Read further information about NHS employment check standards in our [employment check FAQs](#).

## Health and safety

**Fact: Under health and safety law, every employer must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all their employees.**

Young people on a pre-employment programme, work experience, industry placement or an apprenticeship are considered as your employees.

**Fact: young people aged under 18 are legally prohibited to do certain activities.**

Employers need to consider whether the work the young person will do:

- is beyond their physical or psychological capacity
- involves harmful exposure to substances that are toxic
- involves harmful exposure to radiation
- involves risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people
- has a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration.

More information can be found on the [Health and Safety Executive young people at work web pages](#).

**Fact: you do not need to carry out a separate risk assessment for young people aged under 18.**

There is no requirement for an employer to carry out a separate [risk assessment specifically for a young person](#). If you are new to having young people in your workforce, review your risk assessment and take into account the specific factors for young people (see above), before a young person starts.

**Fact: Employers do not need to obtain any additional employers liability insurance for young people under the age of 18.**

Existing employer's liability insurance policy will cover work placements/experience. For more information [visit the Association of British Insurers](#).

# Recruitment and selection

For young people with little or no experience of the workplace, finding and applying for jobs can be daunting. How organisations engage with young people during the recruitment process is key. In this chapter we provide guidance on how your organisation can alter the way it engages with young people and highlights resources to help you make the application and interview process as accessible as possible.

Did you know? 689,000 16-24 year olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET).<sup>1</sup>

## Who do you think you're talking to?

The idea that different generations have different workplace desires and characteristics is well researched.

- Baby Boomers 1945 - 1960
- Generation X 1961 - 1980
- Generation Y 1981 - 1995
- Generation Z - Born after 1995.

As more people from Generation Z enter your workforce, consider this information to tailor your recruitment and communications activity to make it more appealing for young people.

### Key characteristics of Generation Z

- Digital natives who expect to use technology and are confident to do so.



- Ambitious but seek more flexibility than previous generations and expect a work-life balance.
- Often prefer information to be delivered in rapid, short bursts if it is to be understood.
- Connectivity and communication are really important and they expect to be kept informed.

## Consider where and how you promote vacancies

Job roles and adverts should be as clear as possible for young people new to the sector or new to the world of work. Use the following top tips when advertising a new role suitable for young people and when refreshing your existing documents.

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust works with the local council to identify suitable groups to promote job vacancies with. Roles are promoted via Manchester leaving care team, local educational training networks and to those on established support programmes in the community.

### Keep it simple

- Avoid using jargon. Ask young people working in your organisation to read through your documents and highlight anything that might be confusing for someone outside the NHS.
- Steer clear of lengthy documents. Help keep the audience engaged but not overloaded.
- Be transparent and clear about what the role involves, and include key information such as shift patterns, working hours and breaks.

## **Sell what you do**

- Be creative and engaging. Describe the types of roles available in your organisation. The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust has developed short ‘day in the life’ videos featuring staff talking about their roles, like this one [Day in the life of a Health Records Clerk - YouTube](#)
- Make sure you share and explain your organisation’s values, as well as how these are used and demonstrated by staff in your organisation.
- Promote your vacancies on social media at peak times of day for young people, mainly evenings. Read more in our guide to using [social media in recruitment](#).
- Attend career evenings at schools or local colleges. Share the types of roles available in your organisation and how young people can apply for them. Our [routes into the NHS infographic](#) is a useful way to visualise the various options.
- Consider advertising in venues used by young people such as colleges, leisure centres, bus stops and at relevant events such as music festivals.

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“At careers fairs, interview people first to get to know them before discussing job roles.”

Ruth Auton, Head of Education, Learning and Organisational Development at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

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Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust hold events for pupils in school years 7 and above and their parents/carers to showcase NHS Careers and engage them in practical activities such as reading a pay slip.



Care4Notts uses Enact Solutions, an approved drama-based learning provider, to share different roles in health and social care with 40 schools in the Nottingham area.



## Top tip

- Ensure clarity in all communications. For example, when applicants confirm they can access the internet this does not necessarily mean they have access to laptops, they might be using a mobile phone.

## Expand your criteria

- When working on a job description or person specification, question whether paid experience or specific experience is needed for the role. For example, young people may have experience of caring for a family member. See our guide to [writing successful job descriptions](#).
- Consider using [values-based recruitment \(VBR\) approaches](#). VBR is an approach to recruitment which will help you find people whose personal values match with your organisation's values.

Eve Haworth, Senior HR Consultant (Workforce), Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS shares her top tips for recruiting young people:



- Make the application process as simple as possible.
- Have an interview that is values-led with a relaxed feel. This is the best way to let applicants present their authentic self.
- Hire based on potential and what can be learnt if the individual aligns with your organisation's values.
- Be creative where you look to attract and engage early careers or those new to the sector.
- Most jobseekers go straight to Google so ensure you try out a job title or two and see what the top hits are. Make sure you advertise there.
- Be social and experiment with the new social media apps and see what works.

## Consider different types of interview

For young people new to the world of work, a formal interview situation can be intimidating and off putting. Adapting your standard interview technique and approach can allow the candidate to better show their skills and characteristics.

### Top tips

- Consider an alternative to a traditional face-to-face, across the desk interview. COVID-19 has led to interviews taking place online and often, young people are comfortable with the technology used for virtual recruitment such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- Consider financial obstacles that may stand in the way of young people achieving their goals. For example, bus fares to interviews, appropriate clothing or shoes to wear for interviews. The Prince's Trust can support young people with these costs through their [Development Awards](#).
- Tailor your interview questions to see past their lack of actual work experience and encourage them to draw on experiences from their home, school or social life.
- Group activities can be a good way to assess for values and behaviours rather than skills.
- Ask if the candidate requires any equipment or needs reasonable adjustments making prior to interview.
- Sharing the interview questions with the candidate before you interview them can support those with anxiety, neurological conditions, or disabilities, or those with neurodiversity such as those with autistic spectrum disorders.

- NHS organisations in Norfolk provide support to unsuccessful candidates and ask them to reapply. See more about how Norfolk trusts support young people's recruitment [in our case study](#).



- South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust partnered with The Prince's Trust to develop a tailor-made pre-employment programme for young people that prepares them for interviews. As a result, jobs have been offered to all seven young people who completed the first programme and candidates scored extremely well in interviews.
- When Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS worked with the Prince's Trust to recruit young people to their vaccination centres, they adapted their interview style. By adopting a more informal and flexible approach, they found that young people appeared relaxed during the interview and performed well as a result.
- The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT) [Get into Hospitals programme](#) uses work placement performance as an important part of the recruitment and selection process. On completion of the programme, if participants gain a recommendation from their supervisor, they are offered the opportunity to apply to the RWT temporary staffing bank, allowing them to take paid work on a flexible working pattern.

## Useful links

- NHS Employers [virtual recruitment guidance](#)
- NHS Employers [Using technology in recruitment blog](#)

## Post offer

As soon as the job offer has been made, your onboarding process should begin. The length of time between an offer being made and a young person starting their role can vary, particularly in the NHS so it is important to keep in touch with your new starter to ensure they stay engaged and supported throughout this period.

- See our [web page reducing the delay between job offer and start date](#) for information and guidance to support young people during this time.
- Send out a 'welcome pack' to the new starter. This allows them to familiarise themselves with the organisation before they start and should include general information about the site they will be working on, how they can get there and who will welcome them on their first day.
- Share information on the employment checks that will need to be completed.
  - [This resource has been designed](#) to make things easier for young people and save you time. It covers what young people need to know about employment checks and what documents they need to provide.
- Assign your new starter a mentor or buddy from the team they will be working in and share some brief information about the new starter with their team. Information such as the new starter's name, what they will be doing in the team, who their buddy or mentor will be, and their start date is helpful so that team members can make them feel welcome.

- Plan a timetable for your new starters' first day and week, to make sure they receive maximum support and opportunities to learn. Share the timetable for the first week with them. This provides the opportunity for them to ask any questions they might have before they start.

## Chapter footnotes

1. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK - Office for National Statistics ([ons.gov.uk](https://ons.gov.uk))



# Retaining young talent

We know from our research with young people and employers across the NHS, that young people are retained because of the support and information they received from their colleagues, managers and organisation. In this chapter we focus on the key areas we've identified that will help you to retain young people in your organisation.

## 1. Health and wellbeing

There is a growing awareness that COVID-19 has negatively impacted young people's health and wellbeing. As they enter your workforce, consider the support you can offer and how you communicate this to new staff.

- Regular one-to-one meetings allow you to check in on day-to-day tasks as well as the wellbeing of your team member.
- Visit our [mental health in the workplace web page](#) for tools and resources to help you make positive improvements to mental wellbeing in the workplace.
- Use our [mental wellbeing in the workplace infographic](#) to learn about statistics and key facts on employee mental wellbeing in the workplace.
- The mental health charity Mind has created Wellness Action Plans that can be used to support the mental health of your team members. [Wellness Action Plan download | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#)
- Signpost to information and resources available internally and externally where young people can access support depending on their needs. Useful links to signpost young people to:

- [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)
- [The charity for children in care and young care leavers | Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](#)

- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust offers wellbeing and personal resilience sessions as part of its mandatory induction programme for new qualified nurses and trainee nursing associates.



- Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Foundation Trust promotes young people support networks such as [City Girls](#) which connects young people with each other and explores careers in health, safety issues, affordable housing tips and [Young Women's Trust 'Work it Out' initiative](#) offers coaching support for women aged 18-30.

- Consider the best ways to share this information with young people. Use your organisation's twitter account, intranet, noticeboards or other communal resources to communicate your message.
- On the other side, respect boundaries, not all new recruits will need support but ensure they know how to reach out for help and who to contact.

The Prince's Trust has partnered with [MYNDUP](#) to provide free sessions to young people enrolled on its health and social care pre-employment programmes. Young people will be able to access:

- Mental health educational content through their platform
- Virtual 1-1 sessions with an accredited practitioner across any of the specialisms hosted on the site. These include therapy, counselling, life and career coaching, and mindfulness and meditation.

## 2. Buddying

Assigning a buddy to a young person joining your team can make a difference to the success of their induction. Buddying is an informal mentoring relationship between a new starter in your team and a more experienced, established team member. This relationship provides a less formal sounding board for the new starter to ask questions about the role as they settle in, helps the new starter to understand the culture of the team and provides another level of support for the new starter in addition to their manager.

The benefits of buddying include:

- giving new starters the opportunity to develop skills
- developing the new starter to become more confident and to grow within their role and expertise
- supporting the manager by providing an additional point of contact
- having a positive impact on retention

- increasing staff productivity through better engagement and job satisfaction (this can spread widely across the team).

Take these steps to set up a buddying system

- Do you have support from your senior management team?  
Buddying schemes are more like to succeed when they are actively promoted and supported by senior management.
- Does your organisation already have a buddying programme in place or information about buddying in your organisation?
- Identify staff within your team to be buddies. Review recent appraisals to see if anyone was looking to develop their management or leadership skills. Alternatively, you may wish to offer all members of the team the opportunity to buddy, and ask for volunteers.
- Provide training for buddies if required. Speak to your HR department to see if there is any central training available.
- Introduce the buddy to the new starter. Ideally this should be done before the new starter's first day in post.

The Prince's Trust provides young people with six months of support as they move into work. Mentors are a group of volunteers who are recruited, trained, and managed by The Prince's Trust. A mentor is matched with a young person and provides personal support, assistance, encouragement and inspiration to young people during this time of transition.

### 3. Development and training

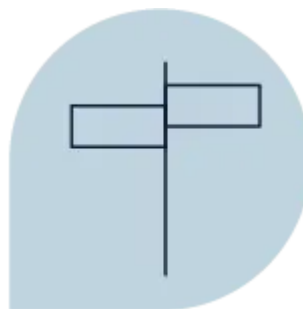
The NHS People Promise commits to providing learning and development opportunities to people from all backgrounds. This

provides an opportunity to support young people to reach their career aspirations while retaining them within the workforce.

- Regular appraisals and one-to-one meetings between managers and new staff allow you to discuss and agree development needs that can support the delivery of patient care and staff career development.
- Taking the time to create a career pathway for individuals can help incentivise them to remain within the organisation.

## Useful tools

### Rewards template (editable)



This fully editable one-page template supports line managers to communicate their organisation's reward offering.

### Non-clinical roles

This interactive Career Route Map is a tool for estates and facilities management within the NHS. It highlights the development opportunities available and has been designed so that people who are new to the NHS, or may still be considering their career options, are able to gain a better understanding of roles they are qualified for and where this could lead them to in the future.

### Clinical roles

Humber, Coast and Vale ICS has developed a Careers Pathway that shows a number of roles available in the health and social care sector, along with details of education providers in the Humber, Coast and Vale area. Within the pathway are role descriptors giving details on duties, salary, experience and qualifications required, pathways to and from that particular role, case studies and other useful links.

Our infographic shows the different NHS career pathways three young people have taken since completing a Prince's Trust pre-employment programme.

## 4. Reward

The NHS faces stiff competition from other sectors who are able to offer young people higher starting salaries than many entry level roles. In order to attract and retain young people, it is important to share details about the whole reward package they can expect to receive if they join your organisation.

This infographic shows the channels you could use to promote your reward package.

A key part of the reward offer is the NHS Pension Scheme. Retirement might seem a long way off for young people working in your organisation but starting conversations with staff early on in their careers will help them to understand the benefits of being a member of the scheme.

NHS Employers ran a workshop for staff aged between 16 and 25 at York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to ask them about their spending and saving habits. The aim was to find out how much younger staff know about the NHS Pension Scheme and if it is important to them.

Here they share top tips for other employers:



- Keep it short and simple – the NHS Pension Scheme is complex, and employers are pushed for time. While staff approaching retirement may value detailed information about their retirement options and tax position, staff at the start of their career may not need all that information. In our session, covering the key benefits of the scheme was enough to achieve great results.
- Communications and engagement – we know young people use social media regularly and like to manage their money using online banking apps. Online tools and communications will be key to engaging with a younger audience, but our session showed that taking time out to talk about money, pensions and savings and having the opportunity to ask questions face-to-face can be very valuable.
- Be strategic – if employees understand and appreciate the value of the NHS Pension Scheme, they are likely to place a higher value on the overall reward offer, which may help to support recruitment and retention.



# In focus:

# Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships can help you to build diverse and committed teams, as well as providing an alternative route into careers for existing staff and young people in your local community.

In this chapter we share our top tips on how you can support young people into apprenticeships as well as good practice shared by NHS organisations. For more information on apprenticeships see our [education and training web pages](#).

## Top tips

**Explain what apprenticeships are.** Young people may have heard of apprenticeships but not know the facts. Signpost to the [health careers website](#) for more [information](#). This [guide](#) details examples of the types of apprenticeships available in health.

Share this key information with young people:

- Apprenticeships are an alternative to full-time college or university study.
- An apprenticeship is a job with training and is available to anyone over the age of 16.
- Apprentices will receive the National Minimum Wage for apprentices which is £4.30 an hour.
- Apprenticeships last a minimum of 12 months up to 5 years.
- Apprentices must spend at least 20 per cent of their time on off-the-job training. The remaining 80 per cent will be spent on

work placement.

- There are over 150 clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships available in healthcare.
- NHS apprenticeships are available from level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs) to level 7-degree apprenticeships (equivalent to a full bachelor's or Master's degree).

**Share examples of apprenticeship pathways.** Use the following good practice examples from NHS organisations using apprenticeships to develop 'home-grown' talent.

- Read how Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust developed its [nursing apprenticeship pathway](#).
- Learn how NHS organisations have implemented [apprenticeship pathways in allied health professions](#).
- Find out how Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust has supported 240 young people through a bespoke [pre-employment programme focusing on apprenticeships](#).

**Make your own promotional video.** The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust created this [Apprenticeships Promotional Video](#) for young people and adult learners eager to 'Earn while you learn'.

**Decide your approach.** [Research](#) suggests that the best way to support young apprentices is to understand what they would (and would not) find helpful, then personalising your approach.

**Provide on-the-job support.** Work with the young person and their training provider to identify and address support needs. Make sure line managers are confident supporting a young apprentice.

**Provide networking opportunities.** Young apprentices may feel lonely in the workplace, particularly if they are the only young person among an older workforce. Creating a community of

young apprentices in the workplace enables them to support each other by talking about their shared experiences and finding solutions to common challenges.

## Good practice in action

### **Apprenticeship mentors**

The Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust provides an informal mentor of an apprentice who is further along in the same apprenticeship, or someone who has recently completed it. We find this adds value, support and also gives the informal mentor some experience to evidence in their apprenticeship. This is in addition to the normal support from their manager, the three-monthly reviews and learning and development.



### **Pastoral officers**

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has a pastoral officer who meets with their new apprentices every eight weeks to ensure they have settled and can discuss any issues; this has been invaluable as the pastoral officer can signpost and refer where necessary. The trust has set up social groups to encourage apprentices to interact and get involved with particular projects, such as citizenship supported within the trust's charity arm. Apprentices buddy up with another apprentice who has been in post for a little while who can share experiences and offer advice.



## **Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust**



**Apprenticeship team** - the trust holds regular apprenticeship information sessions via MS Teams that are advertised through the trust intranet and staff attend team meetings to provide options for specific department's needs. The team works closely with department leads and providers to ensure there are structured pathways for progression and that the protected study is planned in and supported from the start.

**Before an apprenticeship** - Getting to know prospective apprentices and providing as much information as possible to them ensures they understand their responsibilities before they commit.

### **During an apprenticeship**

- Each apprentice is provided with a learner guide at the start and they are gradually building their mentoring support network across both trust sites.
- Regular reviews at three-month intervals and liaising with all sides ensures continued support is provided, and issues can be addressed quickly. This also helps build information about what works really well and areas to target for discussion with providers.
- Organisations can request regular progress reports from providers to help track apprentices on programmes, either through your apprenticeship team or if you are the employer lead for that apprentice.

Suzanne Saleh, Academy Development Lead at Leeds Health and Care Academy shares some examples of good practice from a variety of sources:



- **Frequent pre-employment touch points** such as fortnightly (optional) coffee chats. These were 45 minutes in length and enabled young apprentices to meet each other and start to form bonds. It also enabled us to relay any information/chasers on pre-employment checks. As these were often the person's first role, they had limited understanding as to what this includes and how long it takes.
- **Support structure** - we asked for volunteers from the organisation to work as career mentors to support trainees as they develop their portfolio. We also asked for volunteers from existing trainee cohorts to act as buddies for a new starter (to help with queries they wouldn't want to ask their manager).
- **Keep in touch event** - this was usually six weeks before they start and we would use this as a way for them to network with each other, meet their manager and mentor buddy.
- **Welcome pack** - we gave this out at keep in touch day and used this to provide clarity on what the scheme structure would look like, such as rotational placements, key areas they need to gain experience in.
- **Training plan** - one of the key areas for development for almost all our early talent was in business etiquette and

effectiveness skills. Many of our apprentices were coming straight from further and/or higher education and had very limited experience in the business world. We organised training in items such as time management, welcome to the NHS (King's Fund e-learning via FutureLearn), emotional intelligence, presenting confidently and resilience and wellbeing.

- **Mental health first aiders (MHFAs)** - we had volunteers from existing apprentices and graduates in their second year trained up as MHFAs to provide some dedicated support to early careers staff.
- **Communities of practice** - one of the most important things our trainees appreciated was the chance to come and learn together and network in their new roles. We hosted these once every two months but there was a split among trainees due to frequency preference as some liked shorter, more frequent sessions and others liked longer and further apart.

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