

# How Foundation Trust drove up recruitment and reduced turnover in hard to fill posts

**Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust applies employability approach to open up a new workforce pool.**

## The recruitment and retention challenge

Employers can often face a challenge when recruiting and retaining people with the right attitude and skills to meet patient needs, especially where recruitment is costly and time consuming.

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had been working with partners Jobcentre Plus to meet the challenge, and it was important to support individuals into employment and to have a workforce reflecting the wider community.

They decided on a fresh approach, and chose to focus on one specific area around administration posts. Working with a local training provider, they targeted individuals unemployed for six months or more who showed an interest in working for the NHS in a business environment.



### Benefits:

- Of 34 participants, 97% have completed the programme
- Other programmes have seen 80% of staff recruited this way still in post 18 months later<sup>1</sup> and turnover rates reduced by 50%
- Retention rates of up to 90% when staff recruited using employability approach<sup>2</sup>
- Participants gain increased employability skills, motivation and self esteem - repaid in greater loyalty
- An alternative source of potential recruits for jobs that are hard to fill
- Employees with greater motivation and confidence.

*“This programme of giving an opportunity through a work trial is really successful for us and the candidates that have applied.*”

*“As a result we have recruited wonderful people with much potential who have a lot to offer. Once they are in they want to stay and be developed.*”

*“Some of these recruits could be our managers of the future.*”

*“These types of programmes show that you just need to give people an opportunity to prove themselves.”*

### Julia Watling

Training and Development Manager, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

1. Cwm Taf NHS Trust featured in *Sector Employability Toolkit for Health*, Skills for Health (2009)

2. Skills for Health, *Pre Pilot feasibility study of the Sector Employability Toolkit - Sector Routeway for Health* (2008)

## What they did

Using an employability programme - similar to the Sector Employability Toolkit devised by Skills for Health - was the key to success. The Trust's tailored scheme begins with a two week training programme where candidates selected and pre-screened by Jobcentre Plus are able to brush up their CV and interview skills and are given an overview of the NHS.

The programme developed with the Trust focusses on the skills required for admin and clerical staff. All participants are guaranteed an interview at the end as part of the programme and this is then followed by a work trial lasting six weeks if appropriate posts are available.

This work is part of the Jobcentre Plus Local Employment Partnership programme. The advantage of such partnerships is that it allows the Trust to tap into the wider talent pool available in their local community. Jobcentre Plus screens local candidates with the right attitude and ensures they are pre-trained with the basic skills for the job.

## How they achieved success

It was vital to gain support of managers where participants were to complete their work trials. One manager recently commented, "I wish we could do this with everyone as you really see what you are getting over the six weeks." Another commented, "What will I do if this person leaves? She has been a significant member of the team in our department."

The Trust has benefited in many ways, such as capturing transferable skills like communication and people skills.

A recent participant who had previously worked in the Post Office for 15 years has been able to make the most of her transferable skills in the hospital environment. Other delegates have been recruited into a wide variety of positions such as receptionist, administrator in R&D, administration and clerical support.

The Trust is also looking at further development opportunities for staff, and future recruits will be able to join a new apprenticeship programme which will give them opportunities to study for relevant NVQs.

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