

Recruitment toolkit delivers 'very significant' savings for Cwm Taf Local Health Board

How Skills for Health's Sector Employability Toolkit dramatically improved recruitment to hard-to-fill posts while reducing turnover and sickness rates.



Porters, healthcare, domestic and catering assistants - the health sector often struggles to recruit and retain staff in these traditionally hard to fill posts.

For some years, Cwm Taf Local Health Board (formerly Cwm Taf NHS Trust) in South Wales had recruited those who were already in employment. For the many long term unemployed residents of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff, working for the NHS didn't seem a realistic prospect.

In a bid to improve recruitment and community engagement, the Trust developed a pre-employment programme with local partners aimed at people who had been unemployed long term and/or had health problems.

Skills for Health invited Cwm Taf to trial its sector employability toolkit (SET) - resources to support individuals to develop the skills required for entry level health sector posts.

The partnership with Skills for Health and the local community to use the toolkit has provided several exceptional benefits for Cwm Taf.

Benefits

- Estimated £900,000 savings in recruitment and bank staff costs
- 50% less turnover in this group of recruits
 - 80% of recruited admin staff are still with the Trust 18 months on
- 30% lower sickness levels of recruits
- Strategic human resources benefit - 30% of healthcare assistant recruits are likely to go on to train as qualified nurses
- Recruits preparedness for the role.

"The SET provided a good structure and source of materials but also provided the flexibility to enable Working Links to use our own experience and to include other activities. The interview questions were appropriate both for the job role and the level of candidates."

Sue Dann,
Employers Solutions Performance Manager, Working Links.

What we did

Cwm Taf Local Health Board worked with local partners Job Centre Plus, the Neighbour Learning Centre (the training facility of Merthyr Tydfil County Council), Want2Work, Working Links and Remploy to use Skills for Health's Sector Employability Toolkit.

Job Centre Plus encourages job seekers to participate in the Trust's pre-employment programme, which comprises a recruitment and selection process, two week training course and guaranteed interview.

The Employability Toolkit adds a three week work trial during which, crucially for a low income community, candidates continue to receive job seeker's allowance.

The Toolkit's resources can be used to support individuals to develop the skills required for entry level health sector posts. Other features include an employability skills and recruitment checklist and materials, plus guidance to support recruitment and selection.

Training is then linked to the NHS knowledge and skills framework (KSF), national occupational standards (NOS) and national standards for adult literacy and numeracy.

The work trial allows individuals to demonstrate their ability and highlights areas for future development while focused feedback boosts their confidence and motivation.

At the end of the programme, both managers and participants have a clear understanding of whether an individual is suited to the job. Informed decisions on both parts mean a strong likelihood of a successful, long term partnership between employer and employee.

"The tangible benefits of the Sector Employability Toolkit are enormous. The nature of the selection process means that we get to recruit very motivated, committed individuals which has a really positive effect on retention levels. It's a win-win approach, with great benefits for us and also for the local community"

Patrick Riley,
HR manager, Cwm Taf Local Health Board

For more information visit
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/sectoremployabilitytoolkit
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greater quality and productivity.

The logo for Skills for Health, featuring the text "Skills for Health" in a white, sans-serif font on a dark blue background.

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