

# **Involving / Care... Ambassadors in delivering workplace career activities**

Summary of four project self-evaluation reports, 2018/19

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## Acknowledgements

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Evaluation of the Involving *I Care... Ambassadors* in delivering workplace career activities projects  
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## Executive summary

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### Background

*I Care... Ambassadors* are people who work in social care and promote social care careers, to help people decide if social care is the career for them. In 2018/19, Skills for Care made a small amount of funding available to existing *I Care... Ambassador* services to improve the reach of the programme nationally, and to explore the use of *I Care... Ambassadors* in delivering workplace career opportunities, such as taster days, work experience, mentoring, buddying and work placements.

Four *I Care... Ambassador* services were successful:

- Partners in Care, Dorset (a partnership service led by an FE provider)
- Proud to Care, Devon (a partnership service led by Devon County Council)
- Proud to Care, Gloucestershire (a partnership service led by Gloucestershire County Council)
- Care Development East, a partnership service led by a not-for-profit in Suffolk.

Each service proposed to deliver a different project aimed at developing the role of ambassadors in delivering in-work career opportunities, and each encountered different challenges and successes.

### Key findings

- Ambassador capacity was increased in all four projects.
  - Altogether, the number of Ambassadors across the four services increased by 173 ambassadors, nearly a 60% increase on the previous figure.
- Twenty-one workplace career opportunities were delivered over the programme lifespan.
- All four projects said that the skills and confidence of ambassadors in delivering workplace career activities had increased. Two projects also reported that the skills and confidence of employers had increased.
- All four projects suggested that the experience had developed further relationships, for example between services, employer members, ambassadors and clients.
- There was insufficient data to establish whether the workplace career activities were more or less effective in changing people's minds about social care or helping people decide whether a career in care was right for them. However,

projects presented anecdotal evidence which suggested that activities did have a positive effect.

- Unit costs were high comparable to benchmarks, however reported additionality was also high.
- One service felt that the project was not sustainable going forward, however the remaining three services continue to aspire to grow workplace career activity.

## **Recommendations**

Other services wishing to adopt this approach should in designing their activities review the lessons learned by the four pilots, in particular:

- it is recommended that services dedicate time early in the process to explore and develop ideas with employers, ambassadors and other stakeholders
  - recognising the continued need to bust myths and overcome challenges, e.g. around the need for DBS checks, travel expenses, safeguarding and insurance
  - assessing and mitigating risks for employers
  - establishing support for ambassadors, for example through networks
  - building on existing relationships and networks e.g. Registered Manager networks, where possible.
- it is recommended that services design a clear package or menu of choices for employers and participants to choose from, and:
  - designing-in, where possible, short-term benefits for employers (e.g. the prospect of recruitment) while recognising the programme has longer-term goals for the sector
  - seeking to reduce the administrative and other burdens on time for employers and other stakeholders.
- services will want to work with employers to ensure a positive and welcoming environment for the participants.
- services may benefit from the opportunity to meet other project leads and share ideas and challenges.

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