



Extra Hands
Providers of Care in Norfolk



Extra hands

Using *I Care...Ambassadors* to motivate staff and improve their company reputation

*I Care...
Ambassadors*

What is *I Care...Ambassadors*?

I Care...Ambassadors is an employer-led initiative designed to help tackle the recruitment and retention challenges in adult social care.

I Care...Ambassadors are people who work in social care who deliver activities to promote careers in the sector.

Organisations can nominate staff to be *I Care...Ambassadors* to improve staff retention and support the recruitment of new staff to the sector.

Extra Hands is a private domiciliary care provider in Norfolk which employs over 175 care staff. They provide home care to a range of people, including the elderly, young people with physical disabilities and people with mental health conditions.

Through *I Care...Ambassadors*, Extra Hands has developed the skills and motivation of their existing staff, and improved the reputation of their organisation and the sector. Read how they make *I Care...Ambassadors* work for them.

Anita Walter, Managing Director, first heard about *I Care...Ambassadors* through Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd, who run an *I Care...Ambassador* partnership in Norfolk.

The partnership is made up of seventeen different care providers from across the county. Extra Hands became part of this partnership two years ago.

What we wanted to achieve

Extra Hands experienced challenges around staff recruitment and retention and believed that getting involved with *I Care...Ambassadors* could help them to boost staff numbers. They also wanted to promote the sector as a positive career choice and enhance people's understanding of what care is about.

Anita Walter, Managing Director, says:



We got involved to try to boost our staffing numbers... we're willing to try every avenue and thought *I Care...Ambassadors* might help.

Before joining *I Care...Ambassadors*, Extra Hands staff had already given presentations in local schools and colleges about social care and the career opportunities it could provide. However, they felt that becoming involved with *I Care...Ambassadors* would provide more structure and support to this activity.

What we did

Extra Hands has six staff involved in delivering over 20 *I Care...Ambassador* events over the past two years.

They've organised activities in a number of ways, including

- signing up to local careers fairs
- organising their own events through advertising to local schools and colleges
- responding to requests for ambassadors made through the Norfolk *I Care...Ambassador* Partnership.



The nature of the events has varied and includes

- manning information stands at careers fairs
- presenting to a range of audiences about the social care sector
- facilitating games and practical activities in schools and colleges
- speaking to unemployed adults about the sector, organised through Jobcentre Plus.

The main audience for these events has been young people, although the ambassadors have also provided information to parents and unemployed people at the events.

Ambassadors have received training through the Norfolk *I Care...Ambassador* Partnership to prepare them for the role, including training around presentation skills. They have also used the Resources Bank to find useful information and ideas. Ambassadors get exclusive access to this when they register and it includes lots of guidance and templates.

What we achieved

Extra Hands believe that involvement with *I Care...Ambassadors* has already had significant benefits for them.

It has developed the skills of staff, including increasing their confidence and communication skills, whilst also giving the ambassadors the opportunity to gain presentation skills which they would not have gained in their day to day care role.

The ambassadors have really enjoyed being involved in the initiative and feel empowered by the opportunity to talk about their roles.

“The Ambassadors love doing it and telling people about what they do... they are passionate and want to take away the stigma attached to the sector”.

The wider team have also shown an interest in getting involved and a number have helped out at in-house *I Care...Ambassador* events.

Extra Hands' managing director, Anita Walter, believes that involvement with *I Care...Ambassadors* has improved the company's reputation and that of the wider social care sector. The events have given them an opportunity to raise awareness of the sector and the career progression opportunities available. It has also given them the opportunity to increase local awareness of their services with potential clients, recruits and professionals.

What we learnt

Ambassadors found that many of the people they spoke to at events were unaware of the level of training staff receive within the social care sector, and the career paths available. Ambassadors have played an important role in changing negative perceptions and raising the profile of careers in social care.

Extra Hands feel *I Care...Ambassadors* is definitely worth the investment and they would recommend getting involved to other employers.

The development benefits for the staff involved are clear and high levels of enthusiasm are shown by the ambassadors.

“We wouldn’t be dedicating so much time to it if we didn’t think we were benefitting from it. The rewards make it absolutely worth it ... it can only be good for the industry and for my staff members’ personal development”.

For more information please visit

www.extrahandshomecarenorfolk.co.uk

Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care has a wide range of products and services to help social care employers with their recruitment and retention challenges.

I Care...Ambassadors

I Care...Ambassadors are people who work in social care who deliver activities to promote careers in care. It’s a great way of recruiting and retaining staff.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/icareambassadors

Finding and keeping workers

This online toolkit has a wide range of practical recruitment and retention resources from Skills for Care and other organisations.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/findingandkeepingworkers

Think Care Careers

This website provides lots of information about working in social care including different job roles and Apprenticeships.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers
