

Home Support Services

Using *I Care...Ambassadors* to widen their pool of recruits and find staff with the right values

*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 across 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.

Home Support Services is a domiciliary care provider in Derby that employs over 60 care staff.

Through *I Care...Ambassadors*, Home Support Services has developed the skills and confidence of their existing staff, widened their pool of potential recruits and recruited staff with the right values. Read how they make *I Care...Ambassadors* work for them.

What we wanted to achieve

Home Support Services hoped that setting up an *I Care...Ambassadors* service would help them to attract people with the right values into careers in social care and raise the profile

of the sector, whilst also empowering their existing staff.

This was expected to generate benefits both for the organisation and for the wider sector, by improving the quality of applicants to the sector, and offering workforce development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for Home Support Services staff.

Sarah Kingsley, Compliance and Investigations Officer says:

“We wanted to empower our staff. They really care about their job and we wanted to tap into this compassion so that others can see it”.

Home Support Services feel that the Skills for Care backing of the *I Care...Ambassadors* initiative provides additional influence when trying to promote the sector, such as through the professional information materials that Skills for Care provide, which Home Support Service’s ambassadors use in their events.

What we did

Home Support Services set up their own *I Care...Ambassador* service in 2015. They currently have 16 staff registered with *I Care...Ambassadors*.

They've run four *I Care...Ambassador* events, two of which were organised in partnership with Age UK.

The focus has predominantly been on audiences who either are looking to return to work or for a change in career. This included organising a 'Dignity Day' attended by various other organisations in the sector.

Home Support Services has developed their own presentation to use at *I Care...Ambassador* events. This covers a range of topics, including

- information about the sector and Home Support Services
- topical issues surrounding the sector and what is being done to address these
- career progression and pathways in social care
- the opportunity for the audience to ask the ambassadors questions.

Home Support Services hopes to arrange events in schools in the future to support the delivery of careers information, advice and guidance to young people. They also have an apprentice who they hope will become an ambassador, who could talk to young people about their experience of a social care Apprenticeship.

What we achieved

Home Support Services has experienced a wide range of benefits as a result of their involvement with *I Care...Ambassadors*.

Developed their staff

It has increased confidence amongst staff directly involved with the initiative, and the development of new skills. Staff have welcomed the chance to promote the sector and talk about the benefits of their roles.

Establishing the service has also impacted on the wider team, with improved communication across the organisation and increased morale amongst staff.

“It has provided the staff with a more rounded role... service delivery but also a role in the quality assurance of services”.

Supported the recruitment of new workers

Home Support Services has also experienced direct impacts on recruitment as a result of *I Care...Ambassador* activity. They've employed eight staff who attended group recruitment days where *I Care...Ambassadors* attended, and three who were recruited through a Sector Based Work Academy at which *I Care...Ambassadors* presented.

Promoting the sector through *I Care...Ambassadors* has enabled Home Support Services to recruit from a stronger pool of candidates with the right values, and has opened up recruitment opportunities for some people who would not necessarily have applied previously.

Improved their ways of working

Home Support Services have reconsidered many of their day-to-day processes as a result of involvement with *I Care...Ambassadors*.

They've improved their induction process by *I Care...Ambassadors* mentoring new staff. This supports them to integrate into their role more quickly and also makes current staff feel more involved in the way the company operates.

“It has slotted in with what we already do and made us consider our day to day processes and style of working”.

Involvement with *I Care...Ambassadors* has also led to involvement with other sector development initiatives. After they involved ambassadors in the Dignity Day event, they're now taking part in a national pilot of the Macmillan Values Based Standards.

What we learnt

Home Support Services would highly recommend involvement with *I Care...Ambassadors* to other organisations.

They say that it shouldn't be seen as "something extra", rather it is about embracing what they're already doing.

Home Support Services said that it is very important to try to encompass *I Care...Ambassadors* into their own organisational ethos and ways of working.

They would advise other employers to 'think outside the box' in terms of their recruitment of new workers. People with the right values for social care may not necessarily have experience or qualifications but may have personal life experiences, such as caring for a family member.

I Care...Ambassadors can play a useful role in helping to recruit staff who might not previously have considered working in the social care sector but who have the right values and behaviours to provide high quality care.

Home Support Services is hoping to expand their current *I Care...Ambassador* activity to include local Personal Assistants (PAs). The organisation hopes this will enable them to deliver more activities, and provide wider knowledge about the different roles in social care.

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

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