



Right values, right people:
recruitment toolkit

Embedding values into your leadership and
management of recruitment and retention

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A values-based approach to recruiting and retaining workers needs commitment throughout an organisation. Although senior managers are important in determining how the culture of their organisation embraces its values, if you want to adopt a truly values-based approach, this needs leadership throughout the organisation.

All workers, not just managers, need to understand their leadership role in promoting and upholding the values of their organisation. You can find out more about leadership on the SSSC Step into leadership website www.stepintoleadership.info

It is important to recognise that organisational values are not static and they evolve to reflect changes in wider society including legislation and the needs and outcomes of the people your organisation supports. So leaders and managers in your organisation must be proactive in reviewing your organisational values to keep them current and appropriate and ensure the best outcomes for people using your services.

This applies to recruitment and retention of workers due to the changing landscape in the social service sector. We know that many social service roles have changed significantly over the last 10 years, so it is important that organisations make sure all potential workers understand what you expect of them. During consultation about recruitment and retention, employers said that one of the main reasons for high turnover is that new workers often do not understand what terminology like 'personal care' and 'challenging behaviour' actually means and are often unprepared for the challenges of the roles they do.

If you adopt a values-based approach, as a leader you must make sure that you not only tell potential workers what your organisation's values are but also you explain what these mean. It is good practice to avoid jargon when talking to people using services and it is vital to avoid jargon when advertising for a job role and during the interview process.

Another way of using management and leadership to contribute to a values-based approach is to involve people who use services in the recruitment process. This can be done in a number of ways, such as including people using services in interview panels or including activities in the process that allow people using services to interact with applicants and provide feedback. For example, Angus Council provides recruitment and selection training to people with learning disabilities who use their services to allow them to be part of the recruitment process. This training was adapted from training given to managers and is delivered in a way that makes sure people using services are able to gain the knowledge and skills needed to be part of selection panels.

Alternative methods in the recruitment process can also help organisations decide if that worker could be the right fit for the organisation and if the potential worker feels they are right for the organisation. ELCAP, an organisation that provides services for people with learning disabilities in the Edinburgh area, has moved away from traditional face- to-face interviews to a combination of shorter interviews with job applicants taking part in activities with people who use their service. This allows the recruiters to see how applicants interact with people they will be supporting and provides opportunities for people using services to provide feedback too. It is important when considering alternative recruitment methods that these are fair and equal for all applicants and comply with employment and equalities legislation.

If you experience a high turnover of staff or find it difficult to recruit workers, you might find it helpful to look at where and how you currently advertise. Job advertisements which emphasise the need for previous experience, could be a barrier to people who would like to enter social service profession.

A values- based approach to recruitment involves less emphasis on previous experience and more on values and behaviours shown by potential workers, so it is important that advertisements reflect this. Also, some employers have found a more targeted approach to placing adverts has allowed them to attract and retain workers more effectively because people with an interest in social service careers are more likely to see them. For example, ELCAP found they had more success recruiting and retaining workers when they switched from advertising in a national newspaper to advertising in the local communities where they deliver services.

Another leadership aspect of a values- based approach to recruitment is an understanding that workers often need time and support to 'grow into' new roles. This is likely to apply to workers who do not have a lot of experience. However, you must also consider workers with previous experience who may have to get new skills or adapt to different ways of working in their new role.

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