

The Rectory and *I Care...Ambassadors*

What's the Skills for Care *I Care...Ambassador* initiative?

I Care...Ambassadors is an employer-led initiative, hosted by Skills for Care, which helps to tackle the recruitment and retention challenges in adult social care by attracting new recruits to the sector.

I Care...Ambassadors are nominated by their employer to promote careers in care and engage with local communities through a range of careers-related activities.

Evidence from our *I Care...About Impact* Tool shows that:

- 1 in 3 people who speak to an ambassador are more interested in coming to work in the sector
- 93% of people have a better idea of what it's like to work in social care after hearing from an ambassador
- 83% of *I Care...Ambassadors* feel more motivated in their work after becoming an ambassador.

Introduction

The Rectory is a residential care home that supports person-centred care for people living with dementia. It provides care for up to 25 residents and offers day care for some residents from the local community. It's part of Somerset's 'Specialist Residential Care' (SRC) provision and is supported by a specialist care development nurse from the local healthcare trust.

Angela Hine, Registered Manager at The Rectory talks about how joining the *I Care...Ambassador* initiative has been valuable in supporting both the recruitment and retention of staff.

What we wanted to achieve

The nature of our work can be challenging, but also very rewarding. At any one time I manage around 40 staff so it's important that we have a solid team, all with the right values and behaviours to deliver the very best care.

We initially wanted to use *I Care...*

Ambassadors as a springboard to promote careers in care locally, including opportunities in our organisation. It was important that the initiative supported us to raise awareness of the variety of roles in social care and show young people, in particular, how they can get into the sector and develop their skills for a career, not just a job.



What we did

I've headed up the *I Care...Ambassadors* initiative at The Rectory since we joined and am supported by other team members, particularly our younger staff who can inspire their peer groups by talking about their personal experiences and dispelling any negative myths about careers in social care. Sometimes we attract younger people for work experience through this route. Even if it's not right for them, young people often tell their families and friends about their experience and word-of-mouth can be just as important.

Much of our *I Care...Ambassadors* work takes place in our community. We get involved in talks and careers fairs and hold reciprocal visits with local high schools. JobcentrePlus has also visited us to get a better understanding of the job opportunities in care and the type of environment and culture that can be expected by job applicants. I think that's really important.

We recently visited a high school to talk about careers in care. Around 20, 15-16 year-old students attended an early morning talk outside of regular school hours, which is really inspiring for us as a care service. It means they're keen to genuinely hear more about the fantastic work we do as a sector and the career opportunities on offer.

As a service, we aim to recruit people based on their values and compassion and not always around what qualifications they already have. During talks and careers fairs, we reinforce this message and explain that those joining the sector, will be supported through training and skills development.

What we achieved

Our main achievement has to be the fact that I haven't advertised jobs in our care service since we started the *I Care...Ambassadors* initiative. It's helped us to create a positive recruitment and retention culture.

I think everyone should use the initiative as it supports employers, like us, to promote the fantastic career opportunities that are available, especially to younger people. I started as a volunteer in the sector myself and love giving something back, so want to tell everyone how amazing it is.

The *I Care...Ambassadors* initiative has also benefited the reputation of The Rectory as a great place to work. It supports our ongoing recruitment and retention programme, helping us to attract the right people who are kind and compassionate and support our values. This, in turn, supports our residents who deserve the very best care from the best staff.

We're really grateful for all the support from Skills for Care. As a sector we're often firefighting with recruitment, so care services need to be more proactive and learn more about how to reap the benefits of *I Care...Ambassadors*. Some of our colleagues who've moved into other roles within health and social care still tell us how much we inspired them and that's a real testament to this initiative.

For more information please visit:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ICA

Skills for Care recommends

Finding and keeping workers

This online toolkit has practical tips and resources to help you find and keep workers with the right values.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/finderskeepers

Values-based recruitment

Taking this approach can help you get the right people to work in your organisation, and save time and resources in recruiting the wrong people.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/values

I Care...Ambassadors

Nominate your staff to be ambassadors and deliver careers activities to inspire more people to work in adult social care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ica



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