



## Getting Brilliant Support A New Series on Values Based Recruitment

ABSTRACT

# SOCIAL CARE FUTURE BLOG- HELEN SANDERSON

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## - Introduction

There are lots of conversations at the moment about “workforce” with regular issues being registration, “professionalisation” and recruitment. But to what extent do these proposals start from the issues of concern to people who actually draw on social care? Mostly they haven’t been asked. To what degree are they based on evidence or experience that they lead to their assumed goals?

Isn’t it time for a better debate about how to achieve goals of great support and good jobs? One which includes both the views of people who draw on social care and the interests of workers and employers? We will soon help to host this vital debate

As an early contribution, Social Care Future is hosting a series of 16 blogs by Helen Sanderson about a new approach to recruitment that has values at its heart, pioneered by *Wellbeing Teams*. Wellbeing Teams are award winning for this approach to recruitment, winning the Guardian Public Service Award for HR and recruitment, the LaingBuisson award for recruiters, and Skills for Care award for innovation in recruitment. To be honest though it’s not awards that really matter its getting brilliant support and that is what this series is about

In these blogs Helen goes into the detail of how they recruit in Wellbeing Teams, and what can be learned from this. Each blog is accompanied by reflections from a range of people interested and involved in workforce debates and action.

Helen is working with a large national provider to implement many of these ideas, and Skills for Care will be hosting a free webinar for people who want to learn more at the end of the series. The final blog will include tips to get started and put all or elements of this approach into practice where you are.

We hope that the series will stimulate a better debate about these issues. It will focus on what seems to actually matter in getting the win win for people who draw on social care and workers – including ways of recruiting for values and broadening the search beyond traditional routes. It will include coproduction in the process of recruiting and supporting people and radically different approaches to HR. Please follow the debate on twitter with *#vbrecruitment*.

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# 1. 10 Features of Values-Based Recruitment in Wellbeing Teams



**Helen Sanderson**  
Commentary by Oonagh Smyth, CEO Skills for Care

*It was 9.45 on a Thursday morning in November, and I was holding my breath. It was our first ever values-based recruitment workshop in a chilly church hall in Lytham St Annes. There were 15 minutes to go. We had invited 10 people to join the workshop, and so far our recruitment team of five (two people were helping us as experts by experience) outnumbered candidates by over 2:1.*

*There is a cynical joke amongst home care managers: if you can breathe, you can be a carer. It reflects the continuous cycle of recruitment to cover shifts and the 70% 'churn' in the sector. This means that 7 out of 10 carers have worked in other home care companies, constantly in search of a better working life. In traditional home care, recruitment takes place through a 30-minute interview which can have up to an 80% 'no show' rate.*

*While we were recruiting the first Wellbeing Team with our partner homecare organisation, the Registered Manager, Susan, was doing her own recruitment drive for the rest of the organisation. The day before, she had scheduled 6 interviews and only one person had turned up.*

*I had high hopes that our experience would be different, but by 9.50 it was not looking good. I went to the front of the Church Hall hoping to see people arriving or on the street lost and looking for the building, like a greeter at a Disney Store.*

*Breathe. By 10 am, we had 9 applicants. Only one had worked in home care before, and we had taken a call from the disappointed 10th person who had become unwell overnight and asked if he could come to the next one instead.*

*How did we persuade 9 people to show up for a 3-hour workshop when Susan could persuade only 1 out of 6 people to show up for a 30-minute interview?*

In 2018, after decades of working as a consultant, I got 'skin in the game' and decided to set up Wellbeing Teams as a provider. I registered with the CQC, listing myself as the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual. Wellbeing Teams are small, neighbourhood, self-managed teams which support older people to live well at home and be part of their community.

I was on a steep learning curve about recruitment.

I don't have any background or qualifications in HR or recruitment. In fact, I had only ever been on one recruitment panel before. In Wellbeing Teams, we don't have an HR or recruitment department.

2 Recruitment booklet collated by Pamela Mansell- Future Solutions, January 2022 - all information is freely available from <https://socialcarefuture.org.uk/>

This made winning the Guardian Public Service Award for HR and recruitment both a joy and kind of ironic.

### **Starting with a blank piece of paper**

I remember sitting with my colleague Michelle on a Friday morning in my basement office with a blank piece of paper on the large pinboard, our purpose and values written in black pen at the top. We wanted to design a process that reflected our values and to find great colleagues who were a good fit for us and the work—from their perspective and ours.

We had decided to intentionally look for people from outside of health and care (ultimately, only about 10% of people we recruited had direct experience of delivering care at home). We believed that we could teach people the skills that they needed, and for people with existing experience in home care, it would be harder to unlearn traditional practices, like phoning the office to speak to the manager. We imagined that if people had experience with customers or the public in some way, their values aligned with ours, and they were curious about self-management, then this would be a good place to start. I had no idea, at that stage, how important recruitment would be to Wellbeing Teams and to my mental health.

There were many things that kept me awake at night as a new Registered Manager and business owner. Recruitment was one of them. I lay awake wondering how many people would respond to our facebook advert, whether we had left enough time between the adverts and the recruitment workshop, and if it was too bold not to use job boards.

The process that we designed, experimented with, and kept (keep!) adapting looks different from traditional HR-led recruitment in 10 ways. Before I explain these, let me clarify what I mean by values-based recruitment. When I talk about values-based recruitment, I think about it in two directions: Are we demonstrating our values through the recruitment process? and, Does our recruitment process intentionally attract people whose values align with ours?

### **Values-based recruitment—are you doing it consciously?**

The research around values-based recruitment is compelling. It indicates that this recruitment strategy reduces employee turnover and increases employee satisfaction and performance (Edwards and Cable 2009; Hoffman and Woeher 2006), as well as increasing trust and cooperation between team members (Hurley 2006). It has become a buzz phrase in care, and now most organisations employ their own version of values-based recruitment.

My go-to source about values, and one of the National Advisors for Wellbeing Teams, is Jackie LeFevre. Jackie argues that every organisation does values-based recruitment—the question is whether they do it consciously or not.

According to Jackie, “The things you write and say, how you express them and sequence them, all matter. The shortlist criteria you use, the structure of the interview questions, what you give candidates marks for and what you don’t give them marks for – all this is driven by an underlying set of values. Whether intended or not, certain values are coming through. You are doing value-based recruitment—just not deliberately.”

Values are an expression of what matters most to a person, a group, or an organisation. Values shape our sense of the world, how things work, and what we consider ‘like’ or ‘unlike’ us. In recruitment, two sets of values are at work: those of the recruiting organisation (or a combination of the values of the recruiting organisation and of the recruitment consultancy being used), and the values of the potential candidate.

Jackie says that great hires take place when the values of the employing organisation and the values of the individual align and resonate with one another. This is not about looking for a ‘match’; there is no such thing as the ‘right’ set of values. This is not about taking a values-shaped cookie cutter to the labour market and seeking people who fit that shape.

Consciously, values-based recruitment is about finding the words, processes, and activities which both embody the uniqueness of the employing organisation and put flesh on the bones of a candidate’s sense of what the job might be like in real life.

Jackie recently worked with an organisation which had 'creativity' as one of their values. They talked her through their recruitment process, and it was standard stuff. Jackie asked, "How does your creativity value show up in the recruitment process?"

	<b>Moving From</b>	<b>Towards</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Finding the best candidate for the job. Providing information about the job, tasks, and responsibilities.	<b>Mutual Fit.</b> Approaching recruitment based on the idea of mutual fit. This means providing a range of ways to help prospective candidates get good insight into the role and us as an organisation, and decide whether we are for them first.
Values— attracting	Recruitment based on qualifications and experience.	<b>Value-based.</b> Recruiting based on alignment with values and characteristics and only qualifications that are absolutely required to fulfill the role, which cannot be learned once in the role.
Values— demonstrating	Recruitment design based on efficiency.	<b>Demonstrate the organisation's values.</b> Recruitment design based on demonstrating the values of the organisation—"walking the walk". We want to see recruitment as an opportunity to demonstrate our values as well as to recruit people whose values align to ours.
<b>Who</b> Role	The HR team or another dedicated team is responsible for recruitment (and this may be outsourced).	<b>Everyone is a recruiter.</b> There are a range of people with recruitment as one of their roles. We have Co-production Partners (experts by experience) working alongside us in recruitment, both by participating in recruitment for the organization as a whole, and by supporting people who are recruiting directly to their own team.
Decision- making	Recruitment decisions made by the HR team.	<b>Co-production.</b> Recruitment decisions made by/with the team/manager and Co-production partners. This is clearly outlined in a decision-making agreement.
<b>How</b> Finding people	Recruitment decisions made by the HR team.	<b>Marketing approach.</b> Deciding who to look for based on values and then using a marketing approach based around personas to reach potential candidates.
Process	Interviews.	<b>Groups.</b> Candidates are given opportunities to demonstrate who they are and to shine in a range of ways through workshops.
<b>Success</b> Candidate experience	Overall candidate experience with colleagues is not usually considered in detail. Recruitment, induction, and probation are handled by different departments.	<b>Continuity.</b> Recruitment, induction, and probation are led by the same people offering continuity of experience.
Time	Success is measured by efficiency of the recruitment process.	<b>Invite people to invest time and energy.</b> We ask people to prepare before a workshop and invest 2–3 hours with us in the workshop.
Review and learning	Recruitment process evaluated by the HR or recruitment team based on pre-established metrics.	<b>Learn from everyone involved.</b> Everyone involved in recruitment, including candidates (successful and unsuccessful), is involved in reviewing the process and identifying what experiment is needed to test out ideas for improvement.

The penny dropped, and they agreed that it didn't. The value most evident in their process was efficiency; there was nothing creative visible. "How many creatives do you know that would be attracted by an efficient process?" asked Jackie.

I know that there are some excellent recruitment processes, in particular, those in which provider organisations have thought deeply about how to involve people who use the service, reflected on values, and carefully considered the experience for candidates. From when we started with our blank paper on the pinboard to now, as we support a local authority to recruit their first Wellbeing Team in Extra Care, the 10 key features that we have been using and testing differ from a more typical approach in relation to: purpose, who is involved, how recruitment takes place, and what is seen as success.

**Purpose.** I know this sounds obvious: the purpose of recruitment is to find the best person to fill a vacancy. The nuance here is what we mean by the best person. We think about mutual fit. We want candidates to decide if we are the right fit for them, as well as whether they are the right fit for us. Our process is designed so that candidates rule us out first. If they decide we are not a good fit for them, this saves everyone time and energy.

**Who.** This is the role of the HR team, usually with the local manager, though it might be outsourced. We think that everyone is a recruiter, and we pay attention to that (but not in a typical 'bonus if you refer a friend' way). In each team, there is someone who has a specific role related to recruitment. Co-production matters to us, whether we are recruiting a team to work with an individual or family, or a team to support people in a local neighbourhood.

**How.** Standard recruitment entails one or more interviews. During these, we want to see how people interact together, as teamwork is crucial, to see how people bring their whole selves to the recruitment experience, and to meet them for a few hours.

**Success.** A good recruitment process is quick and efficient while delivering the best candidates. Many people spend more time with their work colleagues than their family, and physical and mental health are significantly impacted by work. We invite people to invest time and energy in our recruitment process (whilst still being efficient).

Here is a summary of the 10 principles that we use in recruitment:

At our team meeting yesterday, Michelle reported that we had invited 101 people to our last recruitment session for a first conversation. This led to two online workshops and ultimately a full team of 12 people who we offered roles. That chilly Church Hall in Lytham St Annes was several years ago now, but I am still learning about recruitment—and if I am honest, I still hold my breath just a little with each new recruitment process.

### **Commentary by Oonagh Smyth CEO Skills for Care**

Our values define us. They influence who we are, what we believe is important in life, the way we live and how we treat people. They also influence our job choices, whether we apply for a job, if we stay and if we do our jobs well.

Skills for Care believes that a values-based approach to recruitment in social care helps make sure that we deliver exceptional care and support. It allows us to showcase our values as an employer and allows us to understand the values of people who want to work with us.

We know that values-based recruitment is accepted as a good approach, but employers often struggle with what that means in practice.

I am pleased to see Helen's blog series which demystifies values-based recruitment, breaking it down into the specific steps that employer might think about.

I would suggest that all employers read these blogs and ask themselves whether they want to give some of these suggestions a go and try something a bit different in their recruitment processes.

5 Recruitment booklet collated by Pamela Mansell- Future Solutions, January 2022 - all information is freely available from <https://socialcarefuture.org.uk/>

## 2. The 'Values' Bit in Values-based Recruitment

Jackie Le Fevre and Helen Sanderson



I thought values were principles, and I didn't think that they mattered much until I met Jackie Le Fevre. I met her through a Twitter connection who suggested I talk to her after a comment I made about values. I messaged her. Talk about passion for your subject combined with almost encyclopaedic knowledge! Jackie is a leading expert in values, and within the year she became a National Advisor for Wellbeing Teams, helping us to define and live our values. I never called them principles again.

She invited me to discover what my top 10 values are using the Minessence Framework.

It was a boring 20 minutes doing an online questionnaire on a less-than-exciting website. Jackie later explained that that is intentional, as you want a 'gut' response rather than an intellectual response to questions, and repeating questions in different ways helps to achieve this. Like all good research, it told me what I suspected already but with a sprinkling of surprises, too. My top value was 'pioneering'. Later, when we repeated this exercise with the national team, we found that I am the only person without 'play' in my top 10 values. No surprise there. I am working on that now (yes, I get the irony of 'working on' play).

In the health and care sector, talk of being 'values based' abounds: values-based recruitment, values-based leadership, values-based coaching, values-based strategic planning—it seems that lots of organisations are now doing 'it' and that 'it' is the thing to do. So that's great— isn't it?

When considering the values that underpin Wellbeing Teams, we wanted to make sure we understood them and to separate the truth from the hype. For this blog, I asked Jackie to describe the thinking behind the 'values' within values-based recruitment. Over to her.

It is true that every organisation, every group, and every individual human has values. It is also true that values are highly significant in every decision that is made, be it individually or collectively. For employers, they inform decisions such as what to emphasise in the job advert, which questions to pose in the selection process, and who to appoint at the end of the day; for potential employees, they determine how best to respond to the advert, what to ask of the panel, and ultimately whether to accept the offer of a new job. Either way, our values play a pivotal role in determining behaviour.

However, is it also true that everyone can give us an accurate explanation of which values are at work in their thinking? Or that they can explain how those values have shaped the results that we see? Not so much, unfortunately. As I said in the introduction, you often hear words like 'beliefs' 'morals' 'ethics' and 'principles' being used and jumbled up with 'values', which makes trying to understand what's actually going on very difficult indeed.

Here we encounter a problem of both meaning and consciousness.

### The problem of meaning

What are 'values' anyway?

Academics talk about 'abstract ideas' that represent concepts about ideal end states (Rokeach 1979) or desirable behaviours that transcend specific situations (Schwartz 1992). In everyday terms, values represent what is most important to us in life by shaping our personal preferences and priorities.

Values are not:

- **Morals** – our adopted viewpoints on what is right and wrong
- **Ethics** – an agreed upon code of behaviour within a group (often based on collective morals)

or

- **Principles** – basic rules or natural laws which explain how things work (think Archimedes Principle)

Values do have a strong relationship with beliefs, which are things about which we are highly certain and so treat as true or real. Based on what we are highly certain about (beliefs) we prefer and prioritise certain ideas (values) about what to do and how to be (behaviour) in order to achieve the outcomes we seek. Having clarity about what we mean when we talk about 'values' in general, and being specific about what values we base our recruitment/selection/coaching/leadership on, is vital for these processes to work effectively.

### The problem of consciousness

A simple model can be applied to whole organisations, small teams, or individual people including ourselves. Consider this problem as somewhat akin to an iceberg: all that we observe of others (and all they observe of us) is 'behaviour' which is made up of what is done—the action—and how that thing is done—the attitude.



This piece of our iceberg is above the water line and, in general, is all we have to go on in an effort to understand the bigger picture.

Both beliefs and values lie deep within the unconscious.

From what we see done, and the manner in which it is done, we form opinions about the nature of the individual or group performing an action. What we cannot see is the driver of that behaviour—the 'why' behind the 'what', or the stuff below the water.

7 Recruitment booklet collated by Pamela Mansell- Future Solutions, January 2022 - all information is freely available from <https://socialcarefuture.org.uk/>

Values are energy-laden ideas that sit in the limbic system of the brain where there is no language. The limbic functions in terms of what it feels rather than what it 'thinks' or 'knows'. Together, our beliefs and values function as a kind of background operating system. This gives us an internal, 'autopilot' sense of how the world works and where we fit in and enables us to develop our own shorthand ways of navigating everyday events. It would be highly inefficient, for example, to have to figure out from scratch how to greet colleagues each morning.

You have probably noticed that in different workplaces, there are different rituals for how the morning starts. Some workplaces are quite low key and calm: everyone gets their own individual brew and focuses on the task at hand with very little informal interaction. Other workplaces are noisy and sociable from the moment that two or more people are present: stories are shared and favourite mugs are remembered by whoever is putting the kettle on.

It is entirely possible that both these teams of people have the same beliefs, such as 'our work matters', or 'we are here to do our best'. But if the teams then prioritise different values as the best way to accomplish the work, we observe them behaving differently. Our first team might value 'hierarchy and protocol'. Knowing that everyone from top to bottom has a lot to do, they do not want to distract colleagues. Internally, their behaviour is not seen as rude or cold but rather as considerate. In contrast, our second team might value 'peer support' and feel that reinforcing the relationships between colleagues each morning makes the rest of the day run more smoothly and productively. So this behaviour is not seen internally time wasting or joking about, but rather friendly interest and concern for one another.

In theory, the model is simple: our beliefs about the world prompt us to value certain things above others, and in concert these two 'forces' drive behaviour. In practice, working with the model can be a challenge. As beliefs and values are deeply encoded within our brains, trying to put them into words is very hard. If we settle for the first thing that comes to mind, it will almost invariably be not-quite-right, since we can't get down deep enough just by thinking.

This makes it sound like a huge challenge to figure out how to attract people who share our values if it is not simply asking what your values are.

### **Values in values-based recruitment**

Jackie's research into values leaves us with two questions.

The first is the obvious one: 'how do we attract people who align with our values and are inspired by our purpose?'

The second is rarely considered as part of mainstream values-based recruitment. It is: 'how do we consciously demonstrate our values throughout the process?' If we attempt the first without the second, we create a values mismatch that will be felt even if it cannot be clearly articulated. This raises the potential of growing cynical discontent as team members wonder why there was so much emphasis on, say, integrity, throughout the recruitment process, yet they did not get their contract to sign on time, and the induction process did not live up to what was promised.

Let's not see values-based recruitment as asking a couple of questions about values in an interview. Let's thread values through each stage of the recruitment process, in how we describe the role, in how we describe who we are looking for, in the adverts we place and where we place them, throughout the application pack, and in all our touchpoints with candidates. At the same time, let's see values-based recruitment as an opportunity to show not just espouse the values of the organisation.

### **In summary**

Values-Based recruitment is not	Values-Based recruitment means
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simply adding the organisation's list of values to the job information or advert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking at each part of the recruitment process and asking how you can use this to attract someone with the values you are looking for</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking a question about a candidate's values at interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising that values sit within the unconscious and embedding values issues within the process instead of asking about them directly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking people to describe how they live one of the values on your list</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating opportunities to see how people live their values rather than espouse them</li> </ul>

Martin Walker comments:

When I was reading, I was taken back to my time in a Local Authority when working on culture change and trying to move the culture to align with a personalised approach. I picked up a phrase 'the way we do things around here...when no-one is looking' which stuck with me. It made me think about the things that are shot through me like a stick of rock.

This is the really human stuff, that which makes us tick. I'm not sure I'm entirely clear what for me is a principle, what is a value, and what is a belief. That I am actively thinking about it as a result of reading Helen's blog feels like a step forward.

At TLAP it's always felt like I'm at home in the human sense rather than the physical these days since the people around me think, act and do like I do. They have the same singular purpose and it feels like we are similarly singular in our intent to realise that purpose. I'm not quite so sure about the rest of the sector, though I see shoots of green and the odd sunflower standing tall occasionally.

### 3. Could a Growth Mindset Matter More Than Qualifications and Experience?



A couple of times a month, on Saturday afternoon, I go for a long walk with my friend Lucy. We talk about relationships, my work, her challenging experiences with Social Services, and her daughter Jodie and son Pete. Jodie lives at home and is in her early twenties. Whilst we are walking, Jodie is at home on her iPad or with the family cat watching TV. Both of Lucy's children are adults with disabilities, and over the last six months, they have struggled to get support that works for them as a family. I have seen her become more and more exhausted.

Lucy manages personal budgets for Jodie and Pete, and she wanted to see if she could use them to recruit support in the form of a personal assistant for herself. We talked about value-based recruitment on our walks, and she was curious about whether it could help.

Jodie is quiet, very slim, and tall. She has been growing her hair recently, and it hangs beyond her shoulders. She usually wears jeans and a sweatshirt with white trainers. Jodie is very polite whenever I meet her, and says hello, and as a young woman of few words I wanted to think about how we could keep her at the centre of the process of decision-making in a way that worked for her.

#### **The purpose of the role to support Jodie**

Once we had clarified how Jodie wanted to be involved in decision making, the next step was to think about the purpose of the role and what she would expect of her assistant. The role was essentially to help open up Jodie's world: to help her build on her interests, become part of her community (both online and in her neighbourhood), and provide practical support to get around. Lucy has been heavily involved in advocating for her daughter throughout the special school system and most recently with adult social care. Jodie is diagnosed as having a learning disability and autism. Lucy, like most parents, wants her children to be happy and safe. When we started to look at the 'Could this be you?' part of the value-based recruitment, Lucy was clear.

"I want them to have qualifications in autism and learning disabilities—whatever the relevant NVQ is—and have between 2 and 5 years experience working with people with learning disabilities."

This is what many people have come to believe provides the safest way of knowing whether someone could support their loved ones well. It is also the way that services typically think about qualifications and experience. If you have a qualification, then you know what to do. If you have experience, then you have demonstrated that you know what to do. I started to gently challenge Lucy about whether there is another way to think about this qualification and experience.

In the last blogs, I looked at the role of purpose and the importance of aligning values and not playing values bingo in recruitment by trying to have an exact match. Now, let's consider the role of qualifications, skills and knowledge in recruitment.

### **Do you need qualifications for the purpose of the role?**

Finding people whose values align with the organisation's values is a way of creating a culture where people can both thrive and deliver the organisation's purpose and vision. We know that culture eats strategy for breakfast, so do values eat qualifications and experience in recruitment? We have all met people who are competent and skilled in their work but awful as a colleague, sometimes referred to in organisations as 'brilliant jerks'.

In many jobs there are key skills required for the tasks that need to be delivered, and I am not minimising this. However, we assume that a university degree tells us something about someone's abilities—or we used to. Some leading organisations, like Google, are not asking for these as a standard anymore.

The world of work is changing so fast that it is less and less likely that a qualification gained a decade ago, or even five years ago, will enable you to perform a role in many sectors. The jobs that children in school now will be doing in the future have not yet been invented.

"If the person has a qualification in autism and learning disabilities, then they will know how to support Jodie," said Lucy.

A qualification gives you information about the traits associated with the diagnosis of autism and learning disabilities and general information and strategies around support. I don't doubt that some of this could be useful. But person-centred work means learning about *Jodie's* experience of autism and learning disability and exactly how *she* communicates and needs to be supported. The experts in this are not found in a college or a qualification; they are Lucy and Jodie. The challenge, then, is creating the manual on 'how best to support Jodie' based on Jodie, not on theory.

"But that would take so much time!" said Lucy. Yes, and whether a potential assistant has a qualification or not, that is the purpose of induction: to support them in becoming 'Jodie experts'. Experts in reading her non-verbal communication, experts in knowing when to lean in and when to stand back, and in knowing how to deliver the support Jodie needs in a way that works for her.

### **Qualifications and becoming 'Jodie experts'**

This is one of the challenges for services and for families. If we recruit people for values and purpose, then the onus is on the organisation and the team leader or family to make sure that the carer knows how to provide great support. One approach to this assumes that competence can be achieved through qualifications and a standard induction, But this will not make people 'Jodie experts'. Another approach is to recruit people whose values align to the organisation or family and then teach them what they need to learn to become experts in how to support Jodie.

This shifts away from the reliance on qualifications and standard training towards personalised training that reflects the person who is being supported and fundamentally changes how we think about recruitment and qualifications, as well as how learning and development departments work. You can see why it is easier to rely on a qualification and hope that people become 'Jodie experts' along the way.

You might be thinking that qualifications are expected in social care. Indeed, there are expectations in the sector about how this should be done. Skills for Care developed the Care Certificate that standardised what is expected in social care. The regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), expects everyone to be appropriately trained to do their job (and have certificates to demonstrate this). Although CQC cannot require carers to have the Care Certificate, the perceived messages from the sector and regulator are that providers must make sure everyone has the Care Certificate. The Care Certificate is not transferable from one organisation to another. This means that even where people have gained the Certificate, they have to go through a similar process and be assessed again when moving from one organisation to another.

### **What about experience?**

"How will I know that they can do the role if they don't have experience?" asked Lucy.

11 Recruitment booklet collated by Pamela Mansell- Future Solutions, January 2022 - all information is freely available from <https://socialcarefuture.org.uk/>

Recent experience can be useful and in some situations essential, but it can also be unhelpful.

I explained to Lucy the experience that potential candidates were likely to have. If we asked for experience in supporting people with autism or learning disabilities, candidates are likely to have worked in a small group home.

It cannot be assumed that someone who has worked in a group home would have a lot of experience that would be useful in supporting someone in the family home, with the main focus of the role being expanding their life experiences and being part of their community. They may also have to unlearn some work habits to be able to best support Jodie in the family. For example, they might be used to being closely managed with regular team meetings and formal processes, or to working in a blame culture where no one takes any risks and everything has to be done by the book. Of course, it could also be that their experience was about taking initiative and supporting people to be part of their community, and this could be extremely useful to Jodie and Lucy. What I wanted to challenge, however, was Lucy's assumption that having experience supporting other people with a learning disability and autism was essential to doing the role. If someone has a strong work ethic, is reliable, and is eager to learn, how long will it take to enable them to be competent?

In adult social care, it is common to see recruitment adverts looking for people with experience. I don't think there is any justification for this. It reflects that organisation's belief that people with experience will be able to do the role more quickly and will need less training and support than people without experience. Again, as with qualifications, that was not our experience in Wellbeing Teams.

### **Learning from Wellbeing Teams about qualifications and experience**

In Wellbeing Teams, we intentionally recruited people from outside health and care: people came to us without qualifications in care or experience. That meant that we needed to quickly make sure that they could learn what they needed with coaching to support them to apply what they had learned and personalise it to the people they were supporting. We took the bones of the Care Certificate and built other learning and development opportunities around it. However, what we learned was that alongside recruiting for values, there was something else that had a significant impact on how people could deliver in their role: a growth mindset.

### **Why a growth mindset could mean more than qualifications and experience**

Whether you have experience and qualifications or not, I have learned that what we really need is a growth mindset—for ourselves in our organisation and for the people we recruit.

This is a term coined by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2007). She contrasts a 'fixed mindset' with a 'growth mindset'.

A fixed mindset assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative ability are fixed, and we cannot change them. We respond by striving for success and avoiding failure at all costs to maintain our sense of our intelligence and character.

A growth mindset, on the other hand, thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence, but rather as a springboard for growth and learning. Therefore, people with a growth mindset believe they can learn and change, grow and develop.

This is how Carol describes it in her book:

"For twenty years, my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value. How does this happen? How can a simple belief have the power to transform your psychology and, as a result, your life?

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone—the fixed mindset—creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over... There's another mindset in which these traits are not simply a hand you're dealt and have to live with.. In this mindset, the hand you're dealt is just the starting point for development..Although people may differ in every which way—in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments—everyone can change and grow through application and experience."

As Carol's work demonstrates, the difference is that a growth mindset creates a passion for learning rather than the hunger for approval of the fixed mindset.

In looking for a personal assistant for Jodie, what we needed most was someone with a growth mindset. This would be essential, and whether people have experience or qualifications becomes 'interesting' but not necessarily 'desirable', as both bring pros and cons. If a candidate has experience, some of it could be useful, but they might also have some unlearning to do. Similarly, if they have qualifications, some of them could be useful, but they might also have some assumptions to challenge and unlearning to do. This is how people could perceive the role with either a fixed or growth mindset:

Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
I know about autism and learning disabilities, and I am keen to share my knowledge with you.	I am keen to learn about Jodie's experience of autism and learning disabilities and how I can learn to support her well.
I have experience in supporting people with autism and learning disabilities, and I can show you how I can apply this knowledge to Jodie.	I am keen to bring my whole self, and my life and career experiences, to work and to see how these could be helpful to Jodie.
I am confident that my knowledge and experience is important and useful in supporting Jodie.	I recognise that I might have some unlearning to do, and have some of my assumptions challenged as I learn about Jodie and how to support her well.

In recruiting with and for Jodie, we are developing scenarios and questions to help us learn whether someone has a growth mindset or not. What I learned three decades ago as an Occupational Therapy student is still useful to me in many ways. The experiences that I have had working in health and care since then have shaped who I am and the way I think about work and contribution. I want to recognise the hard work people have put into getting qualifications, and the value of many years of experience, but also to see it for what it is. We need to move beyond the strong focus on qualifications and experience to reflect the importance of a growth mindset, values, and aligning with purpose.

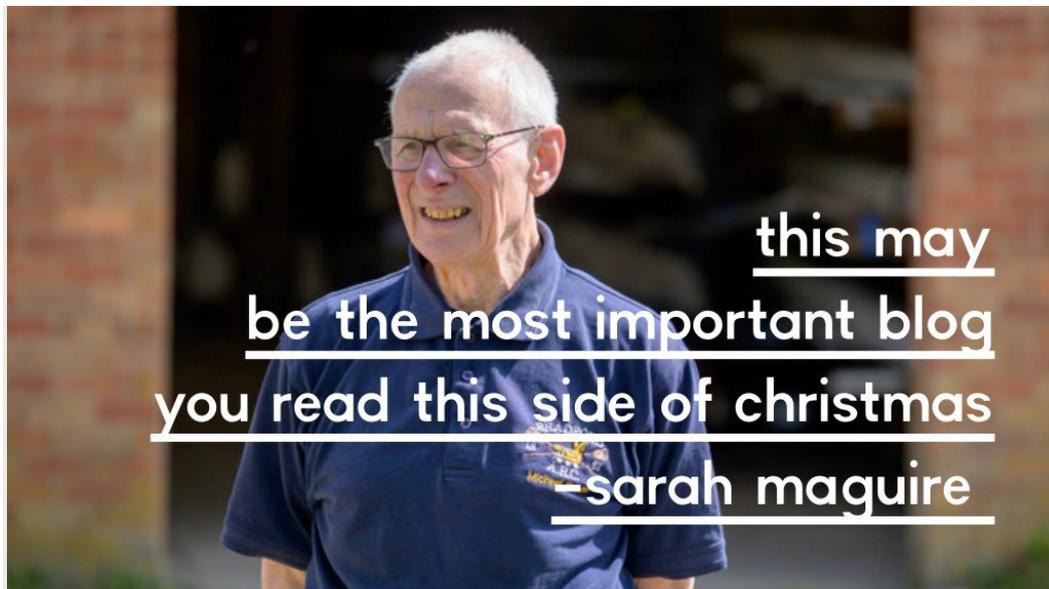
We are still recruiting for Jodie. Being clear about who you are looking for, and the role that you want them to play, are the foundations of value-based recruitment. Where you look for people is the next critical issue to consider. In recruiting for Jodie, Lucy wanted to start with a narrow focus, sharing the information with only a small number of contacts. This was not successful, so we are now expanding to social media and the full range of places to find people who reflect our values. This is the focus of the next blog.

### Anna's reflections

Hearing about Lucy and Jodie's experience really resonates with me as I also employ PAs. I was lucky that my first couple of PAs were friends so I didn't have to face recruiting a stranger. But when I did need to start wider recruitment the 'support' service (commissioned by the council) had clear ideas about what was needed. They wanted qualifications and experience. I knew this was what I didn't want. When I see a CV that says someone has experience of working in a care home, I see that as a concern, as I don't want someone that thinks they know how to be my PA or are there to look after me. I can teach them the practical tasks but the values need to be right. At a time when we repeatedly hear about the shortage of care staff, this is a fantastic opportunity to open up to the wider workforce who may never have considered themselves qualified for these roles, but have so much to offer.

I am about to start recruitment again for a second PA. I hope to use values based recruitment to find someone who understands that it matters to me how my flat looks and are prepared to learn my ways (imagine if someone came into your house and just started putting things in different cupboards). Someone that will provide practical support but not mother me. Someone who will accompany me on life's adventures but not try to limit or control them. My best PAs had never done care work before. But they had 'it'.

## 4. Using One-Page Profiles to Create a New Kind of Person-Specification



One-page profiles are a simple and powerful way to share information about ourselves. Over the past twenty years, we have used them with colleagues and with the people we support. My one-page profile tells you that I am learning calligraphy and podcasting. It shares how it is important to me to be part of my daughter's yoga classes each week, and how much I value working with Michelle, Ben, and Emily. Walking by the sea in North Wales matters to me as well as growing things in my garden-cum-yard. My one-page profile also shares what people tell me that they appreciate about me: that I am thoughtful, supportive, brave, and determined.

We use one-page profiles to share who we are and what matters to us under three headings on one page. The headings are:

- What do people appreciate about you?
- What matters to you?
- What support do you need to be at your best?

Our values are threaded through it like lettering in a stick of rock. Sharing them with each other is one of the ways that we bring our whole selves to work.

We introduce one-page profiles at the start of the recruitment process. We also use the three headings of a one-page profile in our recruitment materials to explain who we are looking for.

### **How do you describe who you are looking for?**

In services, this is known as the person specification, and traditionally, it specifies what qualifications and experiences are needed for a role. It is usually split into two: essential qualifications and experience, and desirable ones.

In values-based recruitment, we describe who we are looking for in relation to their values and characteristics instead of simply their experience and qualification. We frame our description of who we are looking for using the headings of a one-page profile, but instead of calling it a one-page profile, we ask, "Could this be you?"

The first two headings are:

- What are people likely to appreciate you for?
- What is likely to matter to you?

In these columns, we make suggestions about what people are likely to appreciate about you and what is likely to matter to you if you are aligned with our purpose and values. A one-page profile has a third column about the support you need to be at your best. In this part of the one-page profile for recruitment, we describe the support that we will provide for them to excel in the role.

### **Who are you looking for? What are their values?**

We are careful about the language that we use so that it reflects the values of Wellbeing Teams without simply restating the value words and descriptions in ways that are either obvious or sound forced.

#### **What people admire about you**

*You are warm, friendly, reliable, full of energy, a great listener, flexible, a good problem-solver, helpful, honest, trustworthy, have a 'can-do' attitude, confident, self-motivated, caring, generous and kind.*

We use some of the terms to describe our values and expand on them using different language. We are sensitive to words that may reinforce stereotypes—for example, we do not say 'patient' or 'good sense of humour'. These are words you often see in adverts for roles supporting people with disabilities, and they suggest that if you are disabled, people need to have a good sense of humour to work with you and be more patient than you would expect for working with anyone else in the population. We value patience, but we use the word 'kind' instead for this reason.

What is likely to matter to people who align with our values and purpose? Here we look at what might matter to people while balancing being general and specific. You can see a greater emphasis on our purpose (community, making a difference) and on bringing the whole person to work (looking for people with hobbies to share). We do not explicitly use the word 'creativity', as it is still associated with 'good at art', which is not what the value means.

#### **What matters to you:**

**People:** *you are a people person. You love getting to know other people, spending time with people, and working as part of a team. You would describe your family, friends, and neighbours as very important in your life.*

**Your community:** *you enjoy knowing your local neighbourhood and being connected to what is happening locally—whether that is as a member of local groups or just by being in touch with your neighbours.*

**Making a difference:** *you love to know that you are making a difference in people's lives and making a positive difference in the world, however small this may be.*

**Trying new things and being up for a challenge:** *you love having a go and trying something new, and are up for learning new technology and having variety in your life and work.*

**Being busy:** *you are not one for standing still or being bored. You love being on the go. You have lots of interests and hobbies.*

**Being flexible and using your initiative:** *you would hate to do exactly the same job in the same way every day and love variety, and you are a bit of a risk taker. (creativity)*

**Taking responsibility:** *you are happiest working in a supportive and connected team, making decisions together, and trying new ideas. (responsibility)*

The 'How we support you' section reflects how we are trying to demonstrate our values and keep the promises that we make to the team.

#### **This is how we will support you to do a great job and make a difference:**

- *You will be part of a small, self-organised team with no more than ten or eleven other people who you will get to know well.*
- *You will spend time together to think, plan, and make decisions in team meetings every week.*
- *We will provide you with the right training and support that you need to do this—brilliantly!*
- *You will have a Wellbeing Workers' Handbook that has all the information about being a self-organised team.*
- *In your induction, your team will develop its own Person-Centred Team Plan—describing what matters to you as a team and how you will work together.*
- *You will not have a traditional manager, but you will still have lots of support and direction and a Coach available to you when you need it.*

- *You will have a buddy and coaching support to help you learn and develop in your role.*
- *You will support each other on the team by getting and giving feedback to your colleagues. We will provide you with a process to help you do this so that you all feel justly proud of the service you provide and continue to grow, develop, and get better all the time.*

We put this information on one page using the same layout as a one-page profile. We build familiarity with one-page profiles by then sending the recruitment team’s individual one-page profiles in the application pack. We ask candidates to do their own one-page profiles and bring them to the recruitment workshop. Later, successful applicants share their one-page profiles with the people they are supporting, threading 1PPs throughout our work.

**How do you make sure that the information works for people who are new to care and self-management?**

We made significant changes after I was asked in the first workshop whether the role involved personal care. In ‘Could this be you?’, we pay the same attention to making sure people know the position is not a traditionally managed service. Making a career change is scary. It is even more daunting if you don’t have any experience of the career you are considering. What does it feel like to deliver personal care? What could it be like to not have a boss and to work on a self-managed team? We didn’t get this right the first time, as I realised during our third recruitment workshop. One of the last sections of the workshop involves interviewing me, which we call reverse interviewing. After that, we try to get a sense of who would accept the role if offered it. I was particularly curious about one woman—who I will call Jemma—who had not worked in care before and had stood out in many of the exercises. We asked each person in turn to let us know if they would accept the role if offered it. I was listening for the excited “Hell Yes!!!” responses and was surprised when Jemma’s was a quiet “No, I don’t think so.”

As the recruitment team was tidying up and saying goodbye to candidates, I went over to her to ask her about her response.

She explained that it was the self-managing bit that she didn’t like, and that, as people were interviewing me, it became clearer and clearer to her exactly what that meant.

Although she said she had really enjoyed the session and was glad she had come, I was sorry that we had wasted her time. She should not have got through to the recruitment workshop stage without clearly understanding the implications of being on a self-managed team as much as possible without actually experiencing it.

So, we went back to our role description and our ‘Could this be you?’ again and strengthened the references to self-management.

We made another significant change, too: in the first conversation between the potential candidate and the team member, we now specifically talk about personal care and self-management and what these mean in practice.

**How our values are embedded in ‘Could this be you?’**

We have embedded our values, and what they mean in practice, throughout the role description. Here is a summary:

Value	How we refer to it within ‘Could this be you?’
<b>Compassion</b>	We start with relationships—they are the first thing that we mention, and we specify what we mean by great relationships: respect, kindness, and generosity. These are all values that align with compassion. Self-compassion is part of our value of compassion, and we explicitly talk about paying attention to your wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of the people you support and the team.
<b>Responsibility</b>	We stress this in several places by talking about managing your time well, making sure work is coordinated and effective, learning continuously, and talking about authority and autonomy in time management. We hope that you aren’t interested in this role if you do not align with our value of responsibility and you want a manager to tell you what to do.

<b>Collaboration</b>	The most important collaboration is with the person receiving care themselves. We stress the importance of this in several places, starting with ‘whatever the person needs, when they need it, in the way they want it’, and we explicitly talk about working closely with the person’s family, friends, and service workers as well as that the number and time of the visits are decided with the person.
<b>Curiosity</b>	We talk about continuous learning and developing to improve how we work.
<b>Creativity</b>	We specifically talk about creatively solving problems together. The role includes bringing your whole self to work, including your hobbies and interests—we want to hear about how the candidate expresses creativity in their life.
<b>Flourishing</b>	We are explicit about wellbeing and that our intention is to support candidates to pay attention to their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their team and the people they support.

The ‘Could this be you?’ and the role description from the previous blog were developed over four iterations as we learnt from candidates and their responses. I am not sure if it matters that we use the headings of a one-page profile, although this makes it stand out from traditional person specifications. The best thing is that so many people tell us, “I could not believe that you were describing me!”

Sarah Maguire  
**Chief Executive**, Choice Support



**What are my reflections?**

In the late 80’s when I was a support worker, at the time the long stay institutions were closing, there was a greater sense of clarity about what we were trying to achieve. We were often recruited because of the way we thought rather than our past experience. We believed that if we had the right attitude and values, the rest we could learn over time.

There was a simplicity that for me mirrors the ideas behind a one-page profile. I use the word simple to convey importance, focus and what really matters. One page profiles get us back to focusing on people rather than process. They help us think of ourselves as human beings, rather than ‘services’ workers. They help us to see connections and place a value on being who we are, not a version of ourselves that we bring to work.

Our work is about people and yet we can use language and practice that creates distance and sends the message that creativity is not wanted – just follow the rules. Our behaviour can be in direct conflict

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with values we talk about. A one-page profile can start to change this in meaningful and long-lasting ways. They help us to focus on not just what is important to us on a personal level but why. The why is what gets us closer to coming together to achieve individual and organisational purpose.

### **What does this mean for my organisation/the sector?**

One-page profiles are a key part of the changes we are trying to make at Choice Support. We are trying to rethink what being a supporter means and how we share this with people who have never thought about coming to work alongside people before. They are a way of showing our existing workforce that we value them and all their attributes and signal clearly that we want our staff to use them every day in their work with people.

There is a negative stereotype about what a support worker is and a lack of understanding about the work that we do by the public and by the communities we live and work in. One-page profiles can help us change that and connect with each other and our communities in ways that nurture a new understanding of what our work is and who can do it. They can help look in new places for people to join us; they can help us capture the imagination of people who had never considered supporting people or working in social care. Most importantly they help us rethink what communities are by rethinking who we are in relation to the people and places that we live and work. At a time when recruitment is the hardest it has ever been, this is critical for our sector.

## 5. Let's Be Clear: Honest Role Descriptions That Attract People Who Align with Values



*"Is this about personal care?" she asked in a slightly incredulous tone.*

*We were doing our first values-based recruitment workshop, and we had got to the stage where the candidates had an opportunity to ask me questions—the reverse interview part.*

*I felt a stab of anxiety in my stomach.*

*"How could she not know this?" I asked myself.*

*Then, someone else added weight to her confusion: "Is this like a carer's job? I thought it was about wellbeing?" they asked.*

*There is something about my personality—and my team can confirm this—that when something seems clear in my mind, I assume it is the same for everyone. I am working on this, but I had unwittingly extended it to our values-based recruitment process.*

*I was so intent on us not being a traditional care organisation, and so focussed on wellbeing, community, and self-management, that I had not been clear enough. I hadn't communicated that, yes, as well as focussing on wellbeing, our carers would also be supporting someone to get up in the morning, take medication if necessary, and go about daily tasks like meals. This was not transparent in our information or process. I had done well at describing the kind of person we were looking for—the values alignment bit—but poorly at actually describing the role. Yes, it was a 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater' situation. What did I need to do differently?*

### **An accurate role description is vital**

As I write this, it seems self-evident, but I had missed it. The experience in the recruitment workshop began a process of looking deeply at both how we describe the role and how we describe who we are looking for.

We think differently from other organisations about power within recruitment: we think that decision-making is two-way and is about 'fit', rather than 'right' or 'wrong' people. Therefore, we wanted to actively make sure we were providing great information about the role and about ourselves. Over the last four years, we have tried and tested a range of ways of helping people have insight into the role and how the team works, and we have learned from what has worked well and times when people have been unclear. It starts with the role description.

### **How we give people great information before they apply**

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Usually, when applying for a job, there is a job description and a link to the website. Instead of whether a candidate is the best person for the job, I think of recruitment as a mutual question of fit. We want to give people as much information about us and the role as possible, so that they can decide if we are a fit for them as well as us considering whether they are a fit for us. We now use a range of techniques to help candidates learn as much about the role—and us—as possible, and I introduce the six ways that we do this in the next blog. The lessons learned from that first recruitment workshop made me realise how hard we needed to work on that.

## Role Description

Here is an excerpt from our role description for Wellbeing Workers

*Wellbeing Teams do whatever it takes to support people to live well at home and be part of their community. We challenge the loneliness, boredom, and helplessness that many older people experience, and support people to feel connected, contribute, be active, and have purpose, their own way. Wellbeing Workers use their head, heart, and hands to support people and bring our values to life.*

*Our values are: Compassion, Responsibility, Collaboration, Curiosity, Creativity and Flourishing.*

### **What would you do as a Wellbeing Worker?**

- 1. Develop great relationships with people using our services and colleagues, treating everyone with respect, kindness, and generosity.*
- 2. Provide practical support to help people live well at home in the way that the person wants. This will include help with personal care (for example, getting in and out of bed, washing, bathing, dressing), providing meals, support with taking medication, looking after the home, and getting out and about. Whatever the person needs, when they need it, in the way they want it.*
- 3. Be part of a self-managed team. This means working together, taking different roles, and creatively solving problems together. You will provide support and cover for each other, give each other feedback, and celebrate successes as well. You will have a Buddy, and you are supported by a coach (the Wellbeing Leader), too.*
- 3. Manage your time well, and use it in the best way to support people to achieve their outcomes. You have the autonomy and authority to organise your time to do this with your team, the team sets their own rotas, with support if you need it.*
- 4. Bring your whole self to work—your talents, interests, and passions. We will support you to pay attention to your wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of your team and the people you support.*
- 5. Work closely with the person's family, friends, and Community Circles as well as any colleagues from health and social care, to make sure that our work is coordinated and effective.*
- 6. Keep all information up-to-date—the people you support's and your team's.*
- 7. Provide safe, person-centred, compassionate care and work within the team agreements and how Wellbeing Teams work. These are all described in your handbook.*
- 8. Be respectful of people's homes, possessions, and any equipment.*
- 9. Keep learning and developing individually and as a team so we can keep improving how we work and flourish together.*

### **How does this role description attract people who are aligned with our values?**

We have embedded our values, and what they mean in practice, throughout the role description. Here is a summary:

**Compassion** – We start with relationships. It is the first thing that we mention, and we specify what we mean by great relationships—respect, kindness, and generosity. These are all values that align with compassion. Self-compassion is part of our value of compassion, and we explicitly talk about paying attention to your wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of the people you support and the team.

**Responsibility** – We stress this in several places: talking about the candidate managing their time well, making sure work is coordinated and effective, continually learning, and talking about authority and autonomy in time management. We hope that candidates who prefer a manager telling them what to do, rather than aligning with our value of responsibility, would not be interested in this role.

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**Collaboration** – The most important collaboration is with the person we are supporting. We stress the importance of this in several places, starting with, “Whatever the person needs, when they need it, in the way they want it”. We explicitly talk about working closely with the person’s family, friends, and service workers, and mention that the number and time of the visits are decided with the person.

**Curiosity** – We talk about continuously learning and developing to improve how we work.

**Creativity** – We specifically talk about creatively solving problems. The role includes inviting candidates to bring their whole self to work, including their hobbies and interests—we want to hear about how the candidate expresses creativity in their life.

**Flourishing** – We are explicit about wellbeing and about the fact that our intention is to support candidates to pay attention to their own wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of their team and the people they support.

### **Checking that people have understood what the role involves**

After our first experience of the value-based workshop, we’ve made sure that we do not leave it until the workshop to check that people have fully understood what the role is. In the first conversation we have with people, we give them an opportunity to ask someone who is doing the role or who has done it what it is actually like. We go as far as checking,

“Do you know this role includes elements of personal care? How do you feel about that?”

### **A golden thread**

I wonder how different the first recruitment workshop would have been if we had done that. Although it was mortifying at the time, it was such a powerful lesson for me. In my life in general, I need to check that I have actually communicated what I think I have. I am still working on that. I swung from my obsession with values to re-balancing this with the factual information that people need, clearly described, and checking with people that they have understood.

Spending time developing clear, specific, and sufficiently detailed role descriptions has been significant for us in developing our values-based recruitment. It is the start of a golden thread from understanding the role, to demonstrating that people have the values and competences to deliver the role during the recruitment workshop, through to induction, where we support new team members to fully deliver each aspect of the role description. It ends with signing people off as competent in each element of the role at the end of probation. For most people, the job description is a part of recruitment, but it also ends there and then is never seen or mentioned again. For us, it is the beginning of a journey from recruitment to the end of probation.

### **Reflections Dan Minchin, CEO at Chorus**

## 6. Seven Ways of Helping Candidates Understand the Essence of a Role



I was the first Wellbeing Leader, followed by Michelle, Mo, and Mary. We each led the teams at different stages of our learning and development as a provider organisation. I remember updating the Wellbeing Worker Handbook six times in my year as the Wellbeing Leader and Registered Manager, as our learning curve was so steep in that initial year.

For each of us, there were great things about the role and, as you would expect, often significant challenges. For me, the stand-out elements of the role—the highlights—were developing and being part of values-based recruitment; co-production; trying to get decision-making as close to people we supported as possible; and trying new approaches to quality—for example, introducing tactical meetings to reflect on learning. The biggest challenge was embracing coaching. My natural approach is to try to fix problems, and instead I had to get into a different groove of asking thoughtful questions to support people to find their own answers.

As part of helping potential candidates truly understand the essence of the role of the Wellbeing Leader, Mo, Mary, and I each did a 2-minute film describing our personal highlights from the role and our biggest challenge. This was one of seven ways through which we tried to give potential candidates an insight into the role beyond the role description.

The processes we use for this include:

- A week in the life of someone doing this role
- Films of people who have done the role talking about what it is like
- Talking to someone currently doing the role
- An example of a 'to-do' list in this role
- Sharing the promises that we make to our colleagues
- What-if cards during the recruitment workshop
- Recruitment Visits

**Seven more ways we share the essence of roles**

Writing a role description that was both clear and aligned to our values was the first step, but we wanted to go further and test a range of other ways of helping people understand both the essence and the details of the role.

#### **1. Films of people talking about their role**

When we recruited the Wellbeing Leader for the teams in Camden Council, we included three films as part of the recruitment campaign. Here are the three films:

<https://youtu.be/9VuTeATArko> – Mary

[https://youtu.be/M\\_yPRn5zbF8](https://youtu.be/M_yPRn5zbF8) – Helen

<https://youtu.be/DWS17KnOcDw> – Mo

#### **2. To-do list and typical day or week**

Our Community Circles Connector role is unique to our partnership with the charity Community Circles. To help convey the essence of the role, in addition to the role description we developed an example of a 'to-do' list and what a typical day/week task list could look like.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY CIRCLES CONNECTOR

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8.30AM

First cup of tea of the day whilst checking emails, catch up with colleagues via Slack and check today's to do list



9.00AM

Check in with social media, what's new, what are people concerned with, could I contribute to something? Interesting article from Alzheimers Society about relationships, could write a response for next blog? First tweet of the day about matching new facilitator to someone wanting a circle. Post a Monday Motivator picture on the Community Circles Facebook page



9.30AM

Zoom call with my Community Circles Connector Buddy Helen to catch up on our work, share successes, problem solve together and record any information to share at our next Community of Practice meeting



11.00AM

Attend a wellbeing event at the library to share information about Community Circles, tweet about the event



1.30PM

Introducing a new facilitator to someone who wants a circle. Clarified purpose, used a relationship map to think about who to invite and arranged first two meetings



3.00PM

Met with vicar at local church to introduce Community Circles and discuss opportunities for sharing information with members of the parish



4.00PM

Started to write blog about relationships and people living with dementia



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY CIRCLES CONNECTOR

NOON	Catching up with emails	
12.30PM	Attend team meeting to chat about Community Circles, think of how they could be of benefit to people who are supported	
2.00PM	Zoom call with other connectors to update each other on our work	
3.00PM	Groupsite post to share learning from our Zoom call, Twitter and Facebook posts	
3.30PM	Finish blog post about relationships and people living with dementia	
4.00PM	Working out Loud, thinking about contributions	
4.30PM	Phone call arranged with someone who is interested in the role of facilitator	
5.00PM	Skype with Adam to discuss leaflets and ways of best communicating with businesses	
6.30PM	Second circle meeting, facilitating the person centred review	

**We will support you to get started in any area that you are not familiar with.**

**Working Out Loud** is working in an open, generous, connected way so you can build a purposeful network, become more effective, and access more opportunities

**Slack** is a messaging app which brings all your communication together. You can direct message a person or send group messages. It's a great way to be connected

**Zoom** is what we use for video calls and online meetings. It's easy to set up an account which allows you to chat free for up to fifty minutes with a number of people

# A TYPICAL TO-DO LIST FOR A COMMUNITY CIRCLES CONNECTOR

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## PROMOTING COMMUNITY CIRCLES

- Meeting with people living with dementia at Memory Café
- Attending Tea and Talk with Rochdale Circle
- Sharing leaflets with GP's
- Introduce to local church, discuss option of talking to congregation



## RECRUITING FACILITATORS

- Ask Corinne to do guest blog about the benefits of being a facilitator
- Collate quotes from facilitators to develop into postcards, tweets and Facebook posts
- Attend volunteering forum
- Meet with CVS to discuss local support



## COMMUNICATION

- Social media - Titter and Facebook posts
- Groupsite post
- Working Out Loud
- Explore locally where to share blogs



## KEEPING CONNECTED

- Zoom with other connectors
- Appreciation via Slack to facilitators
- Think about Tiny Noticeable Things to share at third Circle meeting
- Keep updated and share via Trello



### 3. An animation that summarises how we work.

At the end of the role description and 'Could this be you' section, we invite people to watch a short animation:

*Time for a short animation? Here are the eight ways that a self-managed team works:* <https://youtu.be/w5q4IYV7GaY>

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This is eight minutes long. I know that by animation standards, this is much too long to grab and keep people's attention; however, for people seriously interested in the role, we hope it is eight minutes well spent. The animation explains how self-management works, since this is the area people have the least experience in, and we hope they are curious about it.

#### 4. Our promises to you

After the animation, we share a link to a visual graphic of our ten promises to our colleagues. To live our values as an organisation, we make promises to our colleagues. This is part of living our value of responsibility: being clear about what people can count on us for. The same image is sent as a postcard to successful applicants before they start their role, with information about how we check that we are keeping our promises. I also ask colleagues to contact me and let me know when or how we do not live up to our promises. This is what we want people to know about us from the outset—what we commit to our colleagues.

**10 promises to team members**

**Wellbeing Teams**

- You will be part of a team that makes the decisions that matter together
- You will develop through feedback and recognition from colleagues and coaches
- You will have a balance of structure and the space to be creative
- You will feel like you belong and be connected to your team
- You will be inspired to bring your whole self to work
- You will be supported to focus on your own wellbeing
- You will have a range of opportunities to advance your career
- You will be supported to develop your strengths, to learn and to flourish
- You will see the impact and difference you make by working with purpose
- You will be part of changing the future of care

#### 5. What-if cards

We use *What-if* cards in the recruitment workshop, and these reflect typical challenges that Wellbeing Workers (or another role that we are recruiting for) could face. Therefore, they are useful for both understanding our values and for giving candidates an idea of the challenges that can be part of the role. I describe these in detail in future blogs.

#### 6. Talking to someone who is doing the role now

There are two opportunities to talk to a Wellbeing Worker: The Wellbeing Worker who has the recruitment role within the team will usually be one of two or three people who has the first

conversation with potential applicants. This is primarily an opportunity to ask someone who is currently performing the role questions about it.

The second opportunity is in the recruitment workshop when we do reverse interviewing, and candidates have an opportunity to ask questions of the recruitment team, which includes a Wellbeing Worker.

## **7. Recruitment Visits**

We used to call these 'Shadow Shifts', but this raised lots of issues about whether people could do a shift of any sort without completing criminal background checks as well as issues of risk assessments. Now we call them Recruitment Visits: an opportunity to see the work we do first-hand and for people we support to be part of the recruitment process. We invite candidates who have been successful up to this point to accompany an experienced team member and someone we support. Obviously, the person we support is happy to be part of our recruitment process this way. Both the team member and the person we support give feedback on candidates after the shift.

Although we work hard to make the role description as clear and specific as possible about what people actually do in the role, we don't think this is sufficient. We want to keep creating and experimenting with ways to powerfully and succinctly convey the essence of the role. Our next step is to build better ways of testing which ones resonate with people beyond just asking people at the recruitment workshop. We want to see if we can target different groups of people that we are seeking to attract using different approaches.

A clear role description is an important start, and I think we are just at the beginning of finding creative ways of conveying our message about the heart of the role and living our values.

### **Edel Harris OBE CEO, Mencap**

What are my reflections?

The role of support worker or carer is difficult to translate into a typical job description. Personalised support by its very nature requires a person centred approach to recruiting a great team. So I love the approach taken by Wellbeing Teams in particular the videos which really bring the role to life. And I love 'our promises to you'. We often forget that recruitment is a two way process and as the employer we need to be clear about our end of the bargain. Values based promises that extend beyond terms and conditions are key.

What does this mean for my organisation/the sector?

Recruitment is a real challenge at the moment. Social care as a profession is often negatively described in the media and alongside the constant narrative of low pay and low skill it leaves the sector struggling and competing for talent. This fresh, positive, human-centric approach provides an opportunity to market these wonderful jobs to a whole new audience. The people with a learning disability whom Mencap supports are currently involved in recruiting their teams and when I share the learning from the Wellbeing Team's approach with them I can imagine that they will have a lot of fun co-producing new recruitment videos!

## 7. Why Purpose Matters in Recruitment



I thought I had the purpose for Wellbeing Teams sorted until Andy challenged me. Andy Brogan is my advisor on improvement, and the roots of many of our practices can be traced back to conversations with Andy. Andy gently challenged me to get really clear about our purpose and to use what he calls the Ronseal Test—does it ‘do what it says on the tin’?

I know that purpose is critical—Simon Sinek’s now legendary Ted Talk about ‘finding your why’ makes that very clear. I know that purpose at work especially matters to young people, who are often called the ‘Purpose Generation’. I learned that I could not simply have my personal purpose as the organisational purpose and that I needed to think about purpose as well as values in our recruitment. Before I explain how I did this, let’s look at the difference between purpose, values, and beliefs, and why this matters to attracting people (especially younger people) to health and care.

### **The difference between purpose, values and beliefs**

I was obsessed with values when I first started to think about recruitment. It was exciting and exacting to be supported by our National Advisor, Jackie Le Fevre, to explore how our values could inform the way we recruited teams. To be honest, purpose was an afterthought, a given. I assumed that people pursuing work in social care wanted to help people and that therefore they would be attracted to any organisation that did this. Thus, I paid more attention to values than to purpose. I don’t think that I am alone here. Generally, the emphasis on values-based recruitment in health and social care disregards the importance of purpose, or, as in my case, simply assumes it is implicit. One of the most well-worn phrases in social care recruitment is, “Do you want to make a difference in people’s lives?”, and this is used to represent purpose: doing work in service of others.

Purpose is different from vision, which refers to the future that the organisation wants to head towards. When a colleague from Mencap sends me an email, their vision is stated at the end of their email:

“Our vision is a world where people with a learning disability are valued equally, listened to, and included.”

Purpose is different from mission, which refers to the contribution that the organisation wants to make towards this vision.

Purpose is simply the reason the organisation exists, and its values reflect how the organisation works to achieve this, and move towards the vision. Beneath the purpose statement there is often a set of beliefs about people and how the world works.

As the founder of Wellbeing Teams, I wanted the organisation’s purpose to resonate with my own ‘why’. I describe my personal purpose as “to innovate, demonstrate, inspire, and support change in health and care, where everyone’s wellbeing matters and communities benefit”. The original purpose for Wellbeing Teams was essentially the same as my personal purpose. Andy did his usual insightful

and direct questioning and, after wrestling with both concepts and language and continually applying the Ronseal test, we landed on:

“To help people live well at home and be part of their community.”

This purpose has three connected beliefs underpinning it.

1. **Living Well** – We think living well means doing what matters to you and being with people who matter to you. It is about wellbeing and flourishing and includes having a sense of purpose—a reason to get up in the morning.
2. **Home** – The second belief is that we all need somewhere to call home and the opportunity to live and die at home. We believe that with tailored support, most people can live well at home throughout their old age. When Wellbeing Teams assist older people, we aim to help people stay at home as long as possible and ideally to die at home if they wish.
3. **Communities** – Finally, we believe that communities are better when they are diverse and inclusive.

We want to recruit people who want to come to work and create this future—where people can live well at home and be a part of their community—together. So, we are looking for people who align with our values, share our beliefs, and are excited about our purpose.

I was unsure about how we phrased our purpose at first; it seemed so broad—could we actually deliver it, despite not controlling all of the variables in people’s lives that would enable them to live well at home? Was it inspiring enough? Would it appeal to younger people? In our recruitment, I want people to be inspired by our purpose and drawn towards our values and beliefs. I want our purpose to appeal to younger people and people working outside health and care.

### **Attracting the Purpose Generation**

Simon Sinek made talking about purpose popular with his Ted Talk and book, *Start with Why*, and research suggests that 6 out of 10 millennials cite a sense of purpose as part of the reason they chose their current employer. This rises to 8 out of 10 for millennials who are high users of social media. The government and Skills for Care have been campaigning to make working in health and care more attractive to millennials. Baby Boomers and Generation X (people who are over 50) make up the majority of the NHS workforce, and this is similar in social care. Attracting more young people to health and care requires more than an assumption of purpose or a glossy purpose statement. The Purpose Generation is looking for evidence that organisations are driven by their purpose.

In Wellbeing Teams, I wanted to attract younger people, and later in this blog I share how we did, but at the beginning I fell into the same traps as other organisations.

### **Using purpose and beliefs in recruitment and avoiding wallpaper status**

In our early recruitment, one of my first mistakes was assuming that talking about “making a difference” was sufficient. Not inspiring at all. When I first started to plan recruitment for our Community Circle Connectors, I asked,

“Are you someone with a passion for people and community who wants to make a difference?”

Luckily, I had Neil Eastwood, author of *Saving Social Care*, working with me, and he challenged this.

He said,

“The headline is exactly right BUT heavily overused by traditional home care organisations, so it has hit wallpaper status. I think we need something completely fresh emphasizing the uniqueness of this role.”

This was the same issue that services supporting people with learning disabilities had grappled with two decades ago. Most providers had a purpose, mission, or vision statement that incorporated John O’Brien’s Five Accomplishments. If you wanted to demonstrate that you were values-driven at that time, it was expected that you would mention these accomplishments in your vision. In recruitment for learning disability services, it was wallpaper too.

### **Putting our purpose and beliefs into action in recruitment**

Wellbeing Teams started supporting older people alongside other home care organisations. We were intentionally not looking to recruit people who already worked in home care, and we wanted to demonstrate that we were different.

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On the websites of what are considered to be the best home care organisations (from CQC ratings and customer reviews), there are no explicit purpose or value statements, but the home-page text often reveals their purpose. For example:

- “Home care and support allows you flexibility to live safely in your own home”
- “Providing quality, award-winning care in the comfort of your own home”
- “Delivering personal care and support for you or your loved one when you need it most”

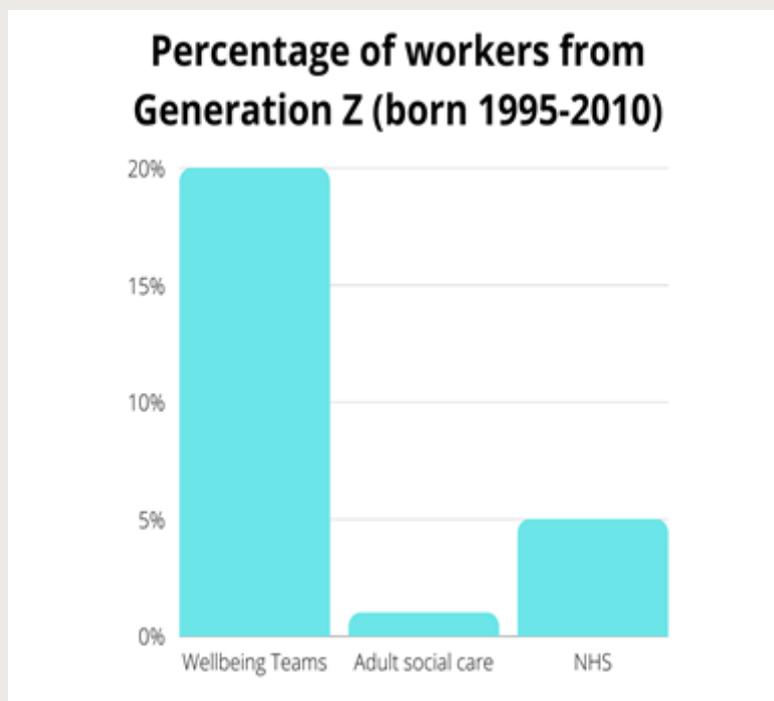
Purpose statement	Key elements	How these can show up in recruitment and induction	Examples from our recruitment process and workshops
To live well at home and be part of a community.	<p>Live well</p> <p>Related values: Compassion Curiosity Flourishing</p>	<p>Emphasis on living well, what matters to candidates, wellbeing, and happiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain through an animation how we want to address the challenges of being older—loneliness, helplessness, boredom</li> <li>• Ask candidates to create a one-page profile in order to learn what and who matters to them</li> <li>• Use values card questions in the recruitment workshop to explore how they take care of their own wellbeing</li> </ul>
	<p>At home</p> <p>Related values: Compassion Responsibility Flourishing</p>	<p>Goal for each of our visits to ‘make people’s day’</p> <p>Ways to enjoy being at home</p> <p>Bringing whole self to work</p> <p>Being safe and well at home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand massage part of face-to-face recruitment workshop to reflect compassion and ways of making people’s day</li> <li>• <i>What-if</i> cards in the workshop looking at scenarios around keeping people safe at home</li> <li>• ‘Could this be you?’ explicitly mentions hobbies and interests</li> <li>• Find out what gifts and contributions people bring to work through one-page profiles</li> <li>• Role description describes how we keep people safe and focus on making their day</li> </ul> <p>These are explained in more detail in subsequent blogs.</p>
	<p>Part of a community</p> <p>Related values: Collaboration Flourishing</p>	<p>Focus on connection and belonging</p> <p>Bringing whole self to work—how can one bring their talents and gifts to share?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Could this be you?’ talks about candidates’ connections to their community</li> <li>• Values card questions look at being connected to one’s community</li> </ul>

The themes are care, comfort, safety, and flexibility, and these organisations’ recruitment processes attract people who want to deliver this. This is also the reason why we were keen to recruit people from outside homecare. It is not just that candidates would need to unlearn traditional ways of working—it is also likely that what attracted them to homecare, the purpose, is very different from the purpose of Wellbeing Teams.

My mum receives care three times a day from a home care organisation. Their website states that their purpose is to keep people at home and avoid having to go into a care home. Their focus is on keeping mum safe through medication, meals, and personal care, as outlined in the care plan developed by the social worker. This reflects our second belief, about the importance of home, but I wanted Wellbeing Teams to go beyond that and reflect purpose, wellbeing, connection, and community. We needed to make sure our recruitment demonstrated our purpose, beliefs, and values explicitly and implicitly at each stage of the process.

### Does reflecting purpose in recruitment make any difference?

I am not sure that we can separate out the impact of our focus on purpose from that of the other elements of value-based recruitment—the sum is greater than its parts. One positive indicator, however, is the percentage of millennials we attract, compared to the NHS and Adult Social Care. 20% of our teams are from Generation Z (young people born between 1995 and 2010), compared with only 1% of the adult social care workforce and less than 5% of the NHS workforce.



Whilst our purpose passed Andy’s Ronseal test, I am still not sure it is wildly inspiring. It does reflect what we believe about people and communities, yet it does not communicate our vision for the future of work, which is about autonomy, relationships, and wellbeing at work.

Peter Drucker, a pioneering thinker on leadership and business wrote, “The 20th century was the era of management. The 21st century is the era of self-management.”

Purpose is critical and I think our recruitment process reflects our excitement about self-management, as well as our values and purpose. At this challenging time for recruitment in health and social care, focussing on work with purpose feels more important than ever, to attract young people and people outside of health and care.

### Lisa Wilson

When I read this for the first time it was in the middle of a busy day and I didn’t feel I had absorbed the words on the page and really thought about what they meant to be able to share my reflections straight away. I wanted to find a time to re read it, away from the busyness. That really gave me time

re-connect with my 'why' – my own purpose, why understanding the purpose, beliefs and values of any organisation I work for is so important to me and drives my decisions.

My purpose, my 'why' – trying to explain what being a commissioner means is sometimes hard, I now really try to explain our, and my purpose differently. Rather than give some technical uninspiring answer to people, instead I reply in a way that is understandable and connects people to it, effectively the Ronseal test Helen speaks about. I also often go back a bit when people ask what roles I've done, my career history etc and talk about the 'why'. I had been a young carer, along with other life events, this had given me a fire in my belly. A driving force that meant I headed in a direction in my career – this was my inner purpose talking.

My beliefs – when I think about the things/the people/the way the world works which unpin my purpose I can identify things like 'I believe in co-production because I know how important lived experiences are to making sure we can deliver on our purpose'

My mission – is to ensure my efforts help us, and me, to achieve that purpose – what gives me the energy to fuel that mission goes back to that heart and gut thing, connects back to my purpose.

After this blog – I am still working on refining my purpose so haven't included it here!

Taking the time to connect to what the blog meant for me in my own context has really made me think hard about what it means for my organisation and for the sector. We have much work to do to inspire new people, help them to see how organisational purpose being clear to them could attract the new talent we so need right now. To ensure we align with what people in communities are looking for, to ensure they are able to live well, at home and be part of their communities. Helen's 20% of teams being from Generation Z should be a beacon for us to aspire towards.

We really have to rethink our approaches, so the key things discussed in the blog are seen, felt and heard throughout recruitment processes and that people are able to clearly get purpose and why it is so important for the people who have so much to give in a sector which desperately needs more people with fire in their bellies. We also need to pay attention when we are trying to retain the amazing talent we see when people are inspired and excited by our purpose and see the links to their own. Really lovely ideas to help us here, I particularly like including approaches in recruitment to bring out people's talents, show compassion and ways of 'making someone's day'. How can I/we make someone's day, how does it feel when someone makes mine/yours? Pretty powerful I think and the last year has shown many of us its these things that matter. Helen comparing what organisations describe their purpose is and how this links to the people they attract was helpful. I also like the 'Could this be you?' – it really could be any of us. My why is what gets me up in the morning, with fire in my belly, drawing on my beliefs and values in how I get my job done. We are learning together, there is much we can learn from each other but also from the direction we head in with these new ways of attracting people to what is a wonderful place to spend the many hours we work in life.

## 8. Who Are You Looking for? Where Can You Find Them?

A USEFUL READ EVEN IF  
*you are already*  
USING VALUES-BASED  
*recruitment*  
-TANIA JESNEY

*I was standing outside in my big coat, in November, at the community centre in Ashton. Inside, Michelle and Helen—part of the recruitment team—were putting the finishing touches on the room where we were holding our first recruitment workshop for Wellbeing Workers. There was bunting around the walls, hand-made by our colleague Emily. Five tables had small, low vases of flowers in the centre, with a scattering of Celebration chocolates, and there was uplifting music playing in the background. Helen, our Co-Production Partner, sat at our welcome desk with name badges and information that we needed people to complete for us on the day.*

*I was waiting to welcome people personally. Like hosting a party, this was always the stage when I worried whether people would turn up. The first people to arrive were two young women, Jodie and Becky. Then Annie was dropped off by her mum. Jack came up to me and said, “You must be Helen!” I was taken aback!*

*“Yes, how did you know?” I asked*

*“From your photo,” he said, “It is on your one-page profile.”*

*Three hours later, we were jubilant. We had met people who we thought had compassionate hearts, took responsibility for themselves and their work, and were open to self-management. Among them were a hairdresser, a van driver, a student, a parent wanting to come back to work, and a shop assistant.*

### **Recruiting from outside health and care**

From the beginning, we were intentional about recruiting people who did not work in home care and did not have experience of working in health or care. We thought that if we could find people who aligned with our values, then we could teach them what they needed to know to deliver great care within a CQC-regulated service. I believed that it would be harder for people already working in home care to unlearn traditional ways of working than it would be to find great people and support them to learn how to provide support wrapped around each individual and delivered in the way they wanted it. This was unheard of at the time. Home care providers were looking for people with experience in home care so that they knew what was expected, were confident in delivering care, and could start work quickly. We wanted people who wanted a career change or to come back to work.

Our next step was to think about who we wanted to attract. Seth Godin is a guru of marketing, and we created what he calls ‘psycho personas’. This means thinking about what people might think and feel about care work, what their fears might be, and what they might hope for. Once we knew that, we would have the information we needed so that our recruitment adverts and messages would really speak to them. This meant finding ways to acknowledge and address fears or to create a sense of possibility that might reflect their hopes.

## Who are we looking for?

There are seven questions that we use to think through the role that we want people to do, the kind of person who could do this role, and how we might be able to attract them.

### Here are the seven questions that we consider:

1. What is the role? We complete the role description.
2. Who are we looking for to fulfil this role? We clarify the values and characteristics that we are looking for in people delivering this role and embed them in 'Could this be you?'
3. Where might the people we are looking for be? What roles might they be doing at the moment in life, work, or their local community?
4. Given the roles that they are currently doing, what might be their hopes or fears if they consider changing direction and working with Wellbeing Teams?
5. How can we show that we understand those hopes and fears, and reflect that in questions, information, or images used within our advertising?
6. Would these questions, information, or images be attractive to people who reflect our values too?
7. Given these answers, where and how would we need to advertise to make sure people saw us?

When we recruit a new team of Wellbeing Workers, we focus on specific groups of people. For example:

- Active retired people who still want to contribute
- Parents who want to come back to the workplace
- People doing hospitality roles, for example, in restaurants, hotels, or bars
- People in customer service roles, for example shop assistants
- People working in education or childcare
- Students

One of our most recent recruitment campaigns was with Camden Council. We recruited a Wellbeing Leader and a Wellbeing Coordinator, and then, with their help, we recruited two Wellbeing Teams.

### What this looks like in practice—recruiting a Wellbeing Leader

The Wellbeing Leader acts as the coach to the team, and, as the Registered Manager (RM), also takes responsibility for delivering the expectations of the regulator CQC. I took this role for the first Wellbeing Teams in Wigan. In Camden, we were working very closely with the Head of Provider services, Amanda. The new Wellbeing Leader would report to Amanda, and she wanted to recruit someone who was already a Registered Manager.

I could understand that, and it is the response we are conditioned to have. It is easy to believe that an existing RM would know what to do and be confident and comfortable in the role quickly. This is the equivalent of home care organisations wanting someone with experience in home care. We talked in detail about the CQC responsibilities required within this role and that it was the processes that we needed to have confidence in. As Wellbeing Teams had been inspected and awarded Outstanding by CQC, we could demonstrate that Amanda could be confident in these processes. Ultimately, Amanda was happy to surrender the expectation that the candidate was or had been a Registered Manager as long as they had experience in leadership and quality.

### Recruiting the Wellbeing Leader—step by step

1. **What is the role? Complete the role description.**

We started by adapting the role description we had used to recruit Wellbeing Leaders to the Camden context. In Camden, there are some key phrases they use in all of their role descriptions, so these were included.

1. **Clarify the values and characteristics that we are looking for to deliver this role and embed them in 'Could this be you?'**

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We went back to the resource that we use for values, the Minessence framework. We knew the values of Wellbeing Teams generally, so we looked at what additional values we wanted to have in someone taking the Wellbeing Leader role. Based on the role, this is what we decided. The descriptors are taken directly from the Minessence framework.

**Adaptability/Flexibility** – *To be flexible and adaptable in response to changing circumstances. Being excited by experimentation and new learning.*

**Pioneerism/Progress** – *Pioneering new ideas (including technology) to make things better for people and providing the framework for realising them.*

**Planning** – *To plan and implement systems and processes that will maximise the use of available resources.*

The Adaptability/Flexibility value reflects the growth mindset described in an earlier blog.

We decided that our ideal candidate would also have the following characteristics:

- Detail conscious and organised
- Completer/finisher
- Empathetic
- Coaching approach

Based on both the values and the characteristics we were looking for, we adapted the 'what people appreciate about you' section in the 'Could this be you?'. We later used the values and characteristics to develop specific Values cards to use in the recruitment process. This is the version we used:

#### **Could this be you?**

*You are warm, friendly, reliable, caring, and full of energy. You are a great listener, a good problem-solver, helpful, honest, trustworthy, and someone with a 'can-do' positive attitude. You have a growth mindset—you want to experiment, learn, and develop. You are confident, organised, self-motivated, and resilient.*

1. **Where might the people we are looking for be already? What roles might they be doing at the moment in life, work, or their local community.**

We were looking for someone who is already in a leadership role within an organisation, who has some responsibility for quality.

1. **Given the roles that they are currently doing, what might their hopes or fears be if they consider changing direction and working with Wellbeing Teams?**

When we tried standing in the shoes of people who were in leadership roles who may consider working with Wellbeing Teams and taking on a role in self-management, we came up with these hopes and fears:

#### **Hopes**

- Freedom from bureaucracy
- To see a difference made in people's and colleagues' lives
- To learn new and innovative ways of working that reflect their values

#### **Fears**

- Covid restrictions
- Self-management is chaos and has no structure
- Regulators won't be on board

1. **How can we show that we understand those hopes and fears and reflect that in questions, information, or images used within our advertising?**

We chose three approaches that both reflected the three hopes and the potential anxiety about self-management.

- The 'rebel at work' theme was about different ways of working without bureaucracy and hierarchy.
- The 'command and control' theme was about the potential of self-management.
- The 'meaningful work of your life' connected new ways of working and self-management with values.

These became the texts that we used on Facebook and other adverts.

### **Theme 1: Are you seen as a rebel at work?**

Do you believe that there is a different way to work—without bureaucracy and hierarchy?

Do you believe that you and your colleagues are at your best when you bring your whole self to work?

Do you want to join us in demonstrating that this is possible in health and social care?

### **Theme 2: Instead of using command and control, do you want to coach and support?**

Do you ask questions when other people want to jump in and give advice?

Do you believe that you can trust people and still get the job done?

### **Theme 3: Are you ready to do the most meaningful work of your life?**

Would you like opportunities to put your ideas into practice?

Do you believe that focussing on quality could be fun and not boring?

Do you believe that self-management could be the key to this?

We then looked for images to go with each of these three themes.

1. **Would these questions, information, or images be attractive to people who reflect our values too?**

This question is really about checking that our values are still central within the advert questions and images.

1. **Given these answers, where and how would we need to advertise to make sure people would see us?**

**We used three approaches for this role:**

- Targeted Facebook adverts where we could specify the demographics and characteristics of the people we wanted to target. We did a Facebook advert for each of the three themes, looking for people who lived within twenty miles of Camden.
- LinkedIn
- The Council's website

Below is an example of the test Facebook Advert we used and the image that we put with it.

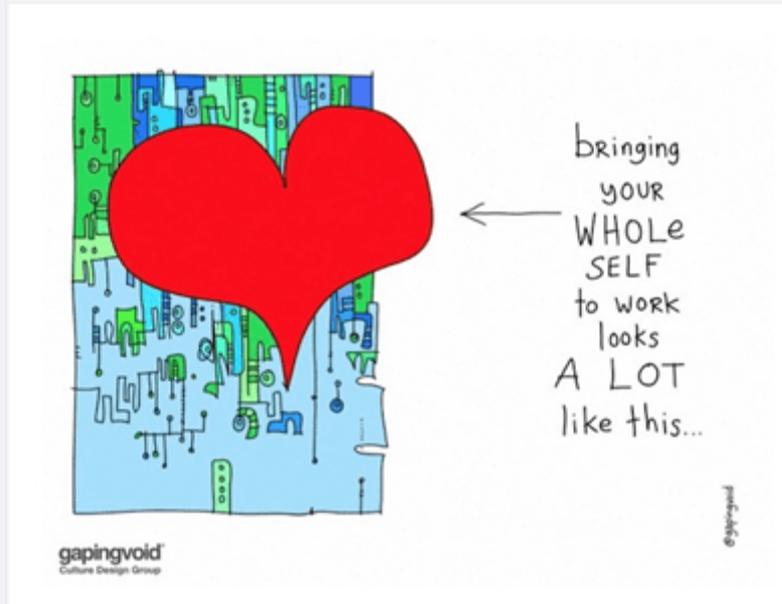


**Michelle Livesley**

Admin · 1 m · 🌐



Are you seen as a rebel at work?  
Do you believe that there is a different way to work - without bureaucracy and hierarchy?  
Do you believe that you and your colleagues are at your best when you bring your whole self to work?  
Do you want to join us in demonstrating that this is possible in health and social care?  
Come and join Camden's innovative wellbeing teams in extra care, demonstrating self- management in health and social care.  
To learn more about the role xxx  
To hear about the role from other wellbeing leaders xxx  
To apply xxx



At the end of this process, we welcomed Claire as the first Wellbeing Leader in Camden. This is what she said about the process: "It was with great excitement that I came across the job advertisement for the position of Wellbeing Leader for Camden. Not only is the position in alignment with my inherent beliefs, passions, and expertise, but the document 'Could this be you?' read as if it was developed from my own CV!"

If Camden had used a more traditional recruitment approach, they would have looked for someone within health and care who was already an experienced Registered Manager. Instead, they were able to separate out the values and characteristics needed by someone who could fill this role and trust that we could teach the successful candidate the skills they would need to excel.

**Tania Jesney**  
**Head of Resourcing and Volunteering**  
**Dimensions**

## 9. Who Makes Decisions in the Recruitment Process? Co-Production in Recruitment



In 2019, we were delighted to win the Guardian Public Services Award for Recruitment and HR. I bet we are the only recipient of this award to where there is no HR department or anyone with that role title. In Wellbeing Teams, recruitment is done by a team, but it is a very different kind of team; we believe that the people who are directly impacted by the decision to recruit someone should be the people making the decisions. Ideally, the decision-makers should be the person who will be supported by the successful candidate and the team who they will be working alongside.

My mum receives home care three times a day. She feels like she is at the mercy of whoever turns up, and feels fortunate when it is a familiar face, since the turnover of staff is so high. I know that being empowered to choose her team of carers would significantly impact her sense of autonomy. And yet, this is something that we struggled with in Wellbeing Teams.

There are three ways that we have tried to get decision-making as close as possible to people who receive support:

- We support individuals to recruit their personal assistants.
- We work alongside a Co-production Partner when we are recruiting teams to support a large number of people.
- We support people to choose their team from existing team members.

People who are recruiting their own personal assistants can have the most control over the process.

### **Supporting people and families to recruit personal assistants**

If you need support with daily living, deciding who to employ is a decision that has a significant impact on the quality of your life. There are many decision-points on the path to deciding who to employ. When we are supporting someone to employ people to support them, we go through these to agree on how each decision will be made. This ranges from how much personal information to share in an advert through to how we decide who to offer the job to.

Joe and Donna asked us to help them recruit two personal assistants to support their adult son, Peter. Peter is twenty-eight, tall, and slender, and loves cars and being outside. He lives at home in an adapted extension that accommodates his wheelchair. The family live in an affluent part of Manchester, and were worn down from trying to work with different organisations to provide support to Peter in their home.

Peter's severe learning disabilities means he needs support in most areas of his life. This has led to fifteen different people coming through their door in the space of two months. Fifteen different people who Donna worried did not know Peter well enough to provide the specific support he needed, and who she felt like she needed to induct to become 'Peter-experts'. Exhausted with this and feeling let

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down when they were asked by the provider to step in—again—to cover for someone who was off sick, the family decided to try something different and recruit people themselves.

We started by explaining our recruitment process and looking at how Peter, Joe, and Donna wanted to be at the centre of the process. We went through our decision-making agreement to ensure that we had a clear, shared understanding of the role that the family wanted to take and what they expected from us. Donna started from the position that to be in control of the process meant that she had to be involved in every single decision. Through working together, we learned that some decisions felt more important than others in giving her a sense of control.

Three months later, when we had successfully recruited two personal assistants for Peter, I asked Donna about the process and anything we could have done differently. We talked about how important it had been to be absolutely clear about the decisions that needed to be made and how the family would make them or when we would make them together. Donna said, “I think if I did this again, I would let you get on with more of it!”

Part of the recruitment process involves having conversations with potential applicants before we invite them to the recruitment workshop. Donna wanted to be involved in those calls, so this was shared between three people: Donna and two Wellbeing Teams employees. This took about five hours of Donna’s time. She said that next time, she would trust us to do more of this so it took less of her time, but she could still feel confident in the family’s role as decision-makers within the process.

### **Recruitment when someone communicates without speech**

Jennie, like Peter, does not communicate with words. When we are supporting someone with significant disabilities to be part of their recruitment process, we have to think creatively together. Jennie, her mum, and circle of support were working with a provider to recruit a team to support Jennie in her flat. Jennie is an artist and makes cards. Part of the recruitment process included taking part in an art session with Jennie. It was hard to tell from Jennie’s behaviour whether there were some people that she particularly warmed to, but the process was a way of demonstrating how Jennie and her needs were central, and applicants needed to be up for this and pay attention to what matters to Jennie, like her art. We later added reflections on this session to candidates’ interview questions.

### **What does our decision-making agreement look like?**

Here is an example of a decision-making agreement we use when we are supporting people to recruit their own assistants or team:

<b>DECISION MAKING IN RECRUITMENT FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS</b>				
<b>Stage/Process</b>	<b>Person’s involvement</b>	<b>Involvement of others</b>	<b>When and where decision is made</b>	<b>How the final decision is made</b>
Developing Personalised Person Spec (‘Could this be you’) Role Description	What to include in the role description, personalised to the person  What to include in ‘Could this be you?’			Person signs off final version before we begin advertising

Contents of Application Pack	What information to include in the 'about you' section. Whether to share a one-page profile Whether to share a 'week in the life' of the person Whether to include a personal letter to potential team members (eg Dear potential team member, here are some things I would like you to know...)	Other One Page Profiles of anyone else who will be involved in recruitment		
Project Plan/Timescales	Co-developing the overall timescale  Date and times of the recruitment workshop Where to hold the recruitment workshop			
Recruitment Campaign—FB Adverts	Person (how family if appropriate) decide how much personal information to share On FB/Indeed .  Whether to use personal or stock photographs			Person decides on how much personal info is used
Workshop Attendance		Who else to involve in the workshop		
Making an Offer	Person decides	We provide advice based on our evaluation of candidates	Workshop	Person subject to references & DBS

### **Working with Co-production Partners when recruiting a team to support many people.**

Sometimes, people cannot recruit their own team. This is the case in home care and other services when a team supports a large number of people.

When Wellbeing Teams were supporting people living at home on a home care contract with the council, we had to think about involving people in recruitment in a different way.

We asked three questions:

- How can we include someone with experience in home care while choosing the first teams?
- How can we involve the people we support in recruitment?
- How can people choose their own team from an existing team?

A Co-production Partner is someone who has expertise through their experience. For us, that meant someone with experience of home care. When we talked to the commissioner in Wigan about how we wanted to work with a Co-production Partner, she immediately suggested Helen Ratcliffe.

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Helen's husband, who had died earlier that year, had been supported by a home care organisation, and Helen had already helped the council by providing a carer's perspective to several working groups. I got in contact with Helen and asked if she would join us to help recruit the first team.

When I arrived at the community hall in Wigan on a windy day in November, Helen was already there. She introduced herself to me, and twenty minutes later I was wiping tears from my eyes.

Helen is a very private person, but she did share that her husband had died in July, and she wanted to give something back. My sister had died two months earlier, and I was still at the stage where I found it difficult to talk about it without a few tears. We talked about our shared grief and our shared determination around home care, and then got on with the job of getting the room ready for our first recruits for the roles of Community Connector and Practice Coach.

We asked Helen to continue working with us to recruit the first Wellbeing Teams, and as we started to support people, we invited people who used the service to join Helen on our recruitment team. We also wanted to get as close as we could to the goal of people supported by Wellbeing Teams choosing their own team from people who we had recruited. In home care, this was much much harder than I imagined.

### **Working with Co-production Partners**

Co-production Partners are experts through their experience. Helen knew what it was like to have carers come through her door three times a day to support her late husband. She had more experience than we did of what this felt like, what made it a great experience, and what was difficult. Helen's experience and perspective was invaluable in informing how we approached recruitment, and Helen was an equal decision-maker with me—the Wellbeing Leader—both as we recruited our first teams and later through all our recruitment workshops.

Every recruitment has a recruitment team which includes: the Wellbeing Leader (or me); the Recruitment Coordinator, often alongside another team member; and a Co-production Partner (Helen) or the person being supported. Everyone introduces themselves at the beginning of the workshop, takes notes on each candidate, and is part of the decision-making at the end. When we recruited for Wellbeing Workers, our first question was always to Helen and the person we supported: "Would you feel comfortable with them in your home?" Then, we talked about each candidate, reviewed their scores and comments, and checked the personality test as we made our decisions.

### **Involving people who use the service in recruitment**

There is a second way that we involve people who we support: after the recruitment workshop, we invite applicants to do a recruitment visit with an experienced team member and someone we support who is keen to help us with our recruitment. Both the person being supported and the team member contribute their views before a final decision is reached on whether to offer the person a role.

### **People choosing their own team: is it possible?**

I had very high hopes for us being able to do this. I imagined that we would have up to six team members supporting someone new, and then, at their 6-week review, they would choose from these six team members who they wanted on their team of four. However, we could not pay people for whole shifts, honour the times that people wanted their support, and generate that amount of flexibility in the schedule to be able to achieve this.

We could have created the flexibility we needed if we had been paying people on zero-hour contracts, but we consciously traded security for the team members (salary and full shifts) at the expense of less choice for the people we served. Of course, someone we supported told us that they did not want someone on their team, we made that happen, but that was nowhere near as far as we wanted to go.

I am frustrated that in the context of home care and the particular challenges there, it is not possible for us to enable people to have a say in their team. We are still learning how to improve at getting decision-making as close to the person as possible. We recently refined our process for recruiting with and for individuals with our national Co-production Partner, Clenton. Clenton has a small team of personal assistants. We went through each stage of the process with him so that Clenton could experience it and together we could find opportunities to improve it. This has resulted in us re-focussing on culture and values in how we describe the role and 'Could this be you?'

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## **Reflections**

**Mary Reed**

***CEO, Wilts CIL for Independent Living***

My priority is to recruit people I can connect with, so it's essential that I am in control of the recruitment process. Our PA register supports this approach; enabling people to match profiles and connect on a human level *Abbie Lawrence – PA Support Worker Wilts Centre for Independent Living*  
People are often overwhelmed by recruitment process but know that they want someone with the right personality and attitude in their lives. Our aim is to put them in control, by giving them the tools, skills, and knowledge and making the process simple and easy to navigate. *Louise Maddox Direct payment Manager, Wilts Centre for Independent Living*

Social care, but not as we know it! This blog shows the importance of putting people in control of recruiting their care: the right fit isn't about experience or qualifications, it's about human connection. *Mary Reed, CEO, Wilts CIL for Independent Living*

*Photos: Mary, Louise, Abbie*