

Sona.

Beyond job boards

10 creative Social Care recruitment tactics



About

In the Social Care sector, people are everything. Attracting those who share your values and are committed to the sector is essential to offering the best experience possible to those you're caring for.

However, you may find that job postings are no longer bringing in the same interest they used to and your applicant pool is gradually drying up. If so, you're not alone: With almost one in ten Social Care jobs sitting vacant in 2022/23, many care home hiring managers are having trouble filling open positions.

This means you will have to get creative and strategic with your recruitment tactics. 'Beyond the job boards' is a resource meant to help you expand your recruitment strategy beyond the tried and tested, and share ten ways you can reach more applicants and fill your open roles

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First things first: The perfect Social Care job description focuses on values

No matter how creative you get in your recruitment efforts, you'll have a hard time attracting candidates if your job description doesn't touch on what's important to most Social Care professionals. At the same time, in such a competitive recruitment environment, it will be easier to focus on finding people with **the right values** and upskilling them, than waiting for the perfect person.

In his book, *Saving Social Care*, Neil Eastwood cites that 60% of professionals in the Social Care industry have chosen their profession because:

- They like helping others
- They want to do something meaningful with their time
- They place significant value on the relationships they form with residents

So you can include practical details, like day-to-day tasks, in your job description, but it also helps to place emphasis on emotional drivers that will appeal to naturally empathetic people. Highlight the fact that they'll be making an impact on vulnerable people's lives and forming part of a supportive team environment.

Additionally, the benefits you offer to employees will have a big influence on a candidate's interest in your position. While a big Christmas party or bonus is nice, point out the perks your employees get to enjoy every week, such as:

- Beautiful relaxing breakout spaces
- Free tea and snacks
- Regular team activities
- Subsidised travelling
- Free car services
- Loan forgiveness or other educational benefits
- Flexible scheduling

[Elizabeth Finn Homes](#), for example, recently won the award for 'care home Employer' at the Great British Care Awards, which recognises organisations prioritising excellence. Their website lists job vacancies by department, with a short value-focused description, making it easy for a variety of applicants to feel like they might be a good fit.



The screenshot shows the 'Work with us' page of Elizabeth Finn Homes. It features three columns of job descriptions:

- Care:** You may already be a Carer in a different setting, although even if you have not been involved in care work but have a caring nature, a commitment to excellence in customer service and a willingness to learn, then you will be given the opportunity to develop your skills as a Care Assistant. We have a Career Programme that will see you go through your initial Induction and then go on to achieve vocational qualifications. After this there are opportunities to progress your career to Senior Carer and above.
- Social Engagement:** Each of our Homes have opportunities for Social Engagement Leaders. Working closely with all teams you will be responsible for organising interesting and enjoyable themed events for our residents. You will also support and lead other team members in facilitating residents maintaining their own social lives and in accessing hobbies and interests. You will have a broad range of interests of your own, probably in the creative arts in order to engage with the residents, and you will also have excellent planning and organisational skills. This is a very rewarding role within each of our Homes, working with all of the teams to ensure a stimulating and rewarding lifestyle is achieved for those who live with us.
- Catering:** We employ Hotel Service Managers, Chefs and Food Service Assistants, all of whom are encouraged to develop their skills to deliver the very best in food service. All of our menus are created daily on the premises with fresh quality ingredients for a very selective and appreciative clientele. There are also frequent opportunities to create fabulous celebration menus for larger social events for our residents and their guests.

Source: [Elizabeth Finn Homes / Work with us](#)

10 Social Care recruitment tactics to help you fill open positions with the right people

If the ad you posted on job board or recruitment website isn't getting much attention, it may be time to give your recruitment strategy an upgrade. These ten tactics are creative ways to reach new candidates and connect with people who will thrive in the Social Care sector.

01 Overhaul your recruitment materials



You may have to go right to the root of things to find the reason your recruitment efforts aren't successful. Be intentional about how you frame your open roles and job descriptions: To draw potential candidates in, think about what made existing staff join your team and want to stay for a long time. Or better, yet, send out a survey and ask them.

You may find that your employees really value your organisation's flexibility or how supportive the team is. Whatever it is your employees appreciate, highlight it in your recruitment materials, even including testimonials from current employees (with their consent, of course).

In our [report on The Big Reshuffle](#), we found that carers want better flexibility and good work-life balance, so be sure to emphasise how your company respects this in your job descriptions and leaflets.

In summary, a good Social Care job description is transparent about what the job entails, but also talks about things like:

- The benefits of joining an inclusive, welcoming team that supports each other
- Emotional drivers, like how meaningful the job is and the impact employees have on their residents' lives
- Day-to-day perks, like free lunch on Fridays or wellbeing support like an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

02 Identify untouched geographical areas

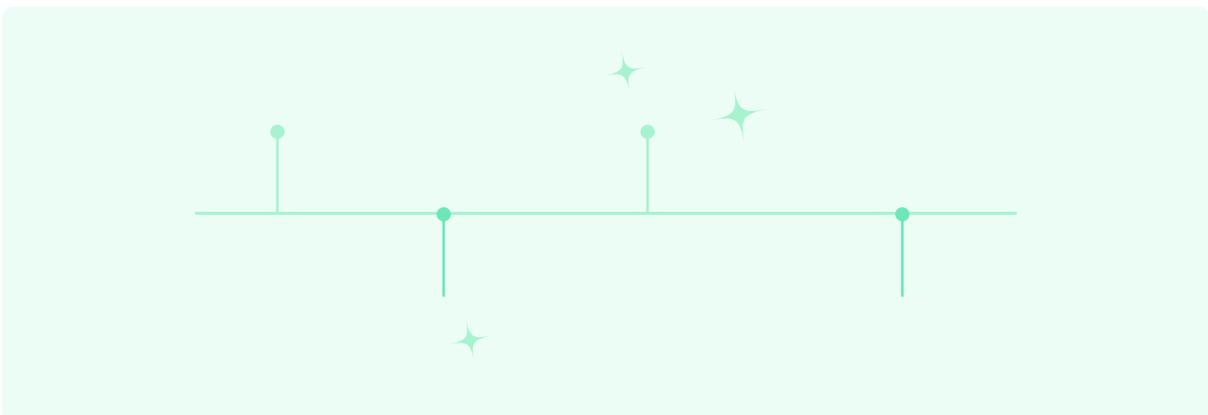


There are a couple of ways to do this:

- **Job fairs:** Attending job fairs that aren't in the city your care home is located in but rather in nearby surrounding areas is a good way to connect with potential candidates who may not be familiar with your company.
- **Bus tours:** If you can't find any job fairs, park a van or bus in places that get a lot of foot traffic (for example at a shopping centre) in nearby locations. You can hand out leaflets and talk to people who might not have been aware of your organisation or had never considered a Care job about opportunities available.

This is also a great way to reach potential candidates who don't currently work in the Social Care sector but could be a great fit (more on this later).

03 Tailor your efforts by candidate age



Marketers don't use the same strategies to reach Gen Z consumers as they do with Millennials or Baby Boomers because they have different drivers and expectations. For the same reason, you could also tailor your recruitment materials to different age groups.

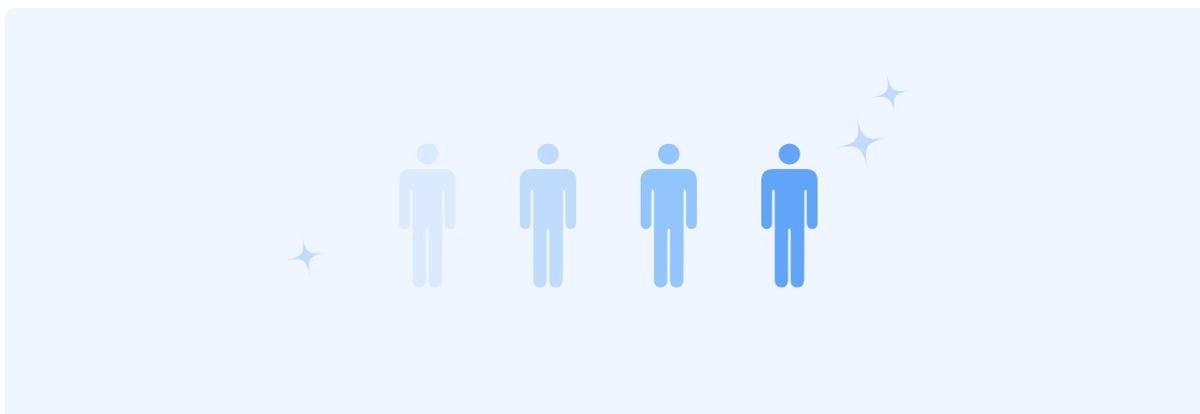
Try modifying the text and benefits on your recruitment materials depending on what age group you're trying to engage with. [Our report](#) found the following distinctions between Social Care professionals among different age groups:

- Senior employees (over the age of 35) value flexibility and being aligned with senior management.
- Younger employees (under the age of 35) value feeling like they're appreciated and heard by their employer.

Therefore, if you're creating leaflets to hand out at high schools that teach Health and Social Care or universities with Health/Care courses, you might want to outline the employee engagement and appreciation initiatives in place at your care home.

On the other hand, if you're advertising to older populations, say in more rural areas, try focusing your materials around the flexibility employees at your care home enjoy and how well your whole team collaborates, from senior management to frontline staff.

04 Reach out to former employees



77% of professionals who left a Health and Social Care job would be open to working in the sector again in the future.

Data collected by the [Harvard Business Review](#) also shows that up to a fifth of employees are going back to their previous job within 36 months of having left it.

When we talked to Care leavers, these were the factors that would make them consider returning to a position in social care:

- 28% said they'd only consider it if the pay, benefits, and working conditions were similar to their current job
- 28% said they'd only consider it if the pay, benefits, and working conditions were better than their current job
- 21% said they'd always consider it

That's over three-quarters of former employees who might be open to coming back to work for you. They may not have contacted you already because they are anxious to do so or don't know how to reach out. So, you can make it easier for them by sending an email along the lines of this one:

“We’re keen to know how you’re getting on and how the past few months have gone for you. Just wanted to let you know that the door is always open here if you’re interested in coming back. We really value the work you did for us and would love to hear from you again.”

This opens the door for people who used to work for you (and may still have emotional ties with coworkers or patients) to make that connection again and consider coming back to your organisation.

05 Reconnect with candidates who turned down your offer



It doesn't just have to be former employees—candidates who rejected your offer can also be a potential source of talent. Reaching out to promising candidates around three months after they declined your job offer is a good way to form positive relationships that might pay off in the future.

Maybe they went to another industry where they were offered more money but have realised they don't feel as fulfilled. Or perhaps they went to another care home but it isn't going great for them (more on that later).

These candidates may now regret turning down your offer, and you could bring this talent back to your organisation. Even if that's not the case and they're still not interested in your open roles, take the opportunity to ask them about their experience with your recruitment process—you may get some useful feedback about your hiring process so you can improve it for future applicants.

06 Utilising your networks



Social media platforms can be a powerful channel to connect with potential candidates. Building a branded page for your organisation can make a difference, as it gives you an opportunity to stand out by sharing your values and promoting your achievements to the community at large.

There are opportunities, however, beyond having a company profile. Many care home managers and professionals are active on social media and might have access to groups and communities that focus on the Care sector. At the same time, their connections (friends and family) are aware of their profession, and they stand to be inspired by them.

In fact, 22% of people who joined the Social Care sector were inspired by someone they knew (The Big Reshuffle).

Asking employees to share your job ads on their social profiles can attract candidates that have similar values and might be interested in applying for care work. This being said, you want to be empathetic about how you address this request, as not all employees will be open to sharing work updates on their personal platforms. To motivate them without adding too much pressure, you can make social media shares a part of an employee referral scheme (more on that in the next section!).

07 Refine your employee referral program



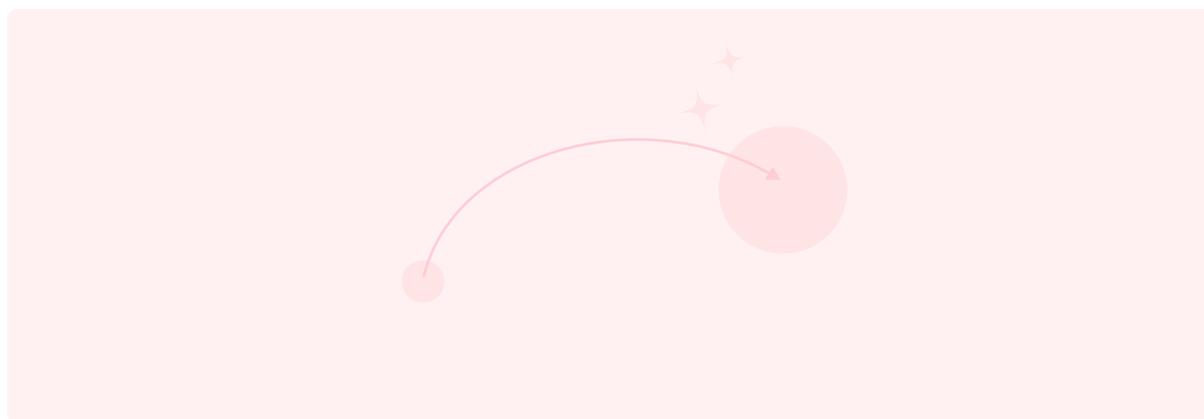
Neil Eastwood emphasises in *Saving Social Care* that candidates are “far more likely to join the sector if they know someone already [in it].”

That's why employee referrals can be so valuable in this industry, and there are a number of ways to run a referral programme. [Care Friends](#), for example, is an employee referral app for administering and gamifying employee referrals, helping you reach more untapped talent and engaging your current employees in a way that will motivate them to refer friends and family.

However you choose to run your employee referral scheme, you want to make sure that not only your employees get something out of it, but also that it's easy and enjoyable for them to participate in.

And depending on how pressed you are for staff, you may want to get flexible—while many programmes require candidates to pass their probation period, you can even offer rewards to employees for referring someone who passes the interview process.

08 Look for candidates abroad



Sourcing international candidates has been a big trend in the Social Care industry, with 20,000 professionals coming to the UK to work in the sector in 2021/22 and 70,000 arriving in 2022/23.

There's plenty of information available on the [Health and Care Visa scheme](#), so we won't get into the legal details here. But we do recommend hiring with empathy when considering candidates from abroad, making sure you acknowledge the challenges these professionals face.

Ideally, the onboarding process for international employees will be different from that of domestic staff, to account for any cultural differences and help them feel welcomed into the organisation.

Accepting international candidates can also help you make the most of your employee referral programme. Some of your current employees may come from other countries themselves, and if they have loved ones abroad, they can recommend family and friends to your care home.

That way, you know the employees you bring on already have a support system when they arrive. Nevertheless, be sensitive about the extra help your international staff may need, and aim to provide them with robust wellbeing support to help them adjust to their new surroundings.

Pro tip: Run frequent wellbeing check-ins with [Sona's Engagement Cloud](#) to help international employees feel supported and ensure their morale stays high.

09 Offer free courses to local family carers



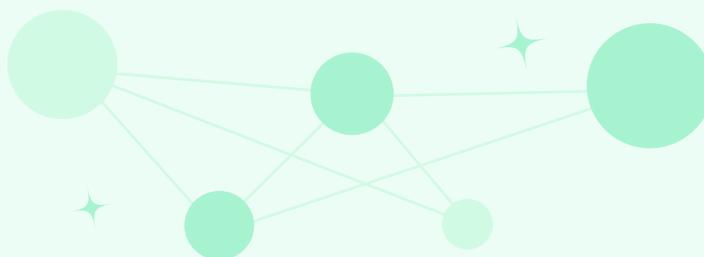
25% of Social Care professionals join the sector because of personal passion.

One great way to do that is by connecting with local family carers. People who already care for a loved one may have the skills they need to be a great Social Care professional without realising that it could be a rewarding career path for them.

One idea is to offer free spaces in your courses on moving and handling, helping you build connections with people who already have informal experience in caregiving and may end up being interested in it as a career.

Additionally, just like you advertise your open roles in the geographic areas surrounding your care home, promote these free courses at petrol stations, shopping centres, and supermarkets, as local family carers probably won't be searching for open Social Care roles on job boards.

10 Connect with professionals in related fields



Professionals who already work with people, say teachers or retail assistants, may have never thought about social care as a career. However, these individuals probably have a knack for attending to and caring for others, and a care role may be similar to their current position while being more rewarding.

So, advertise your open positions in vacancy sections for related fields, such as childcare, education, and retail. You can also advertise these roles with banners and by handing out leaflets around the places such people work, like nurseries, schools, and shopping centres.

In these leaflets and job descriptions, highlight the common elements between these individuals' current roles and Social Care roles, including empathy, patience, interacting with others, communication skills, and teamwork.

“Always try to find and mine those connections, whether they’re through your own workforce, they’re people who’ve left you that might come back, or people who you can find in the community with family care experience.”

Neil Eastwood,
Founder & CEO at Care Friends



Learn more: [Neil Eastwood joins our webinar to discuss The Big Reshuffle](#)

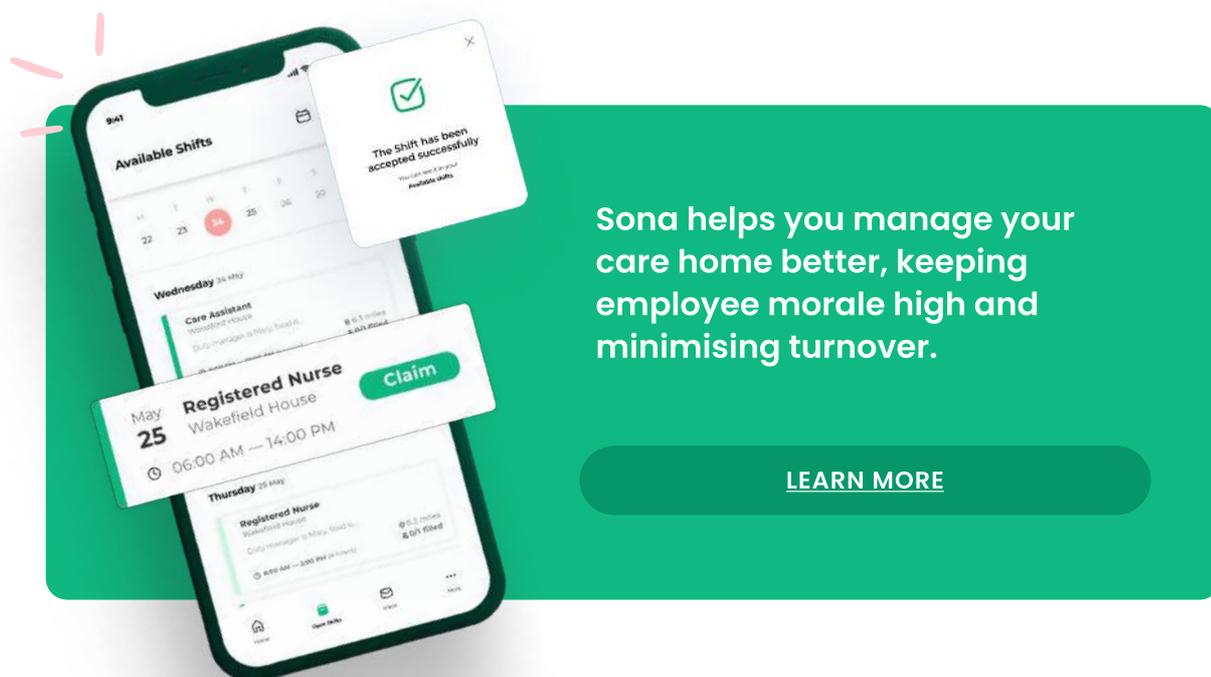


Find the right people and get them to stick around

You don't have to roll out every single one of these tactics, but it's definitely worth trying some of them out for a number of reasons. More creative recruitment strategies will help you reach potential candidates who aren't yet familiar with the sector, as well as reconnect with former employees and applicants who may not even realise they're interested in coming back to your company.

✦ And while recruitment is at the centre of running a successful care home, getting people to join your team will only take you so far—once you get the right people on board, you also need to know how to retain them.

Specialised software like Sona can help. With engagement features like Wellbeing Check-Ins and Employee Recognition, Sona's frontline operating system makes your people feel valued, appreciated, and supported, ultimately motivating them to stick around.



Sona helps you manage your care home better, keeping employee morale high and minimising turnover.

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