

Overhauling Recruitment

Attraction Strategy Toolkit

About this toolkit



The Overhauling Recruitment programme is seeking to change the way that the NHS attracts, selects and onboards people into the service.

Attracting talent into our organisations and facilitating seamless mobility is done on a day-to-day basis by all our organisations and embedding a strategic approach to this is a fundamental tenet.

This pack is designed to support HR Directors, Deputy HR Directors, Heads of Resourcing and their teams in NHS providers and systems to develop an effective attraction strategy which:

- Sets out new and different approaches to attracting a broad range of diverse people into the NHS.
- Improves the ways in which people can move within and across our organisations.
- Details the role the organisation will play in its wider labour market.
- Explores ways in which partnerships can be forged with education and third sector organisations to increase our future success.



This toolkit has been developed with a companion Model Attraction Strategy Framework, available to download from [FutureNHS](#), that you can use when writing your own strategy.

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Why your organisation needs an attraction strategy and how to start developing it *1 of 2*

The challenge of attracting, recruiting and retaining staff is a key issue across the NHS. We need to attract people through a compelling employment offer which appeals to both people with experience and people with potential. This is more likely to be successful when there are strategic approaches and practices that seek to address local, regional and national challenges. The overall goal of an attraction strategy is to identify, engage, and attract a pool of diverse, talented candidates who are a good fit for the organisation and its culture, with the aim of reducing the time and resources needed to fill open positions.

Four stages

1 Diagnose your current position

Before setting off developing your strategy, get under the skin of your current and existing data to understand what your current challenges are. Consider analysing:

- **Protected characteristic demographics** for applicants as well as post codes and locations where candidates are applying from. Use your recent workforce race disability and equality standard (WDES and WRES) reports.
- **Turnover rates** and identifying roles where you struggle to retain staff.
- **Your local market and competition** to understand market shortages or where you are not competitive.
- Information from **candidate experience surveys**, if you conduct them. If you don't then, consider surveying recent applicants.

Define who your ideal candidates are and what their needs, likes and dislikes are. Clearly list the areas you need to focus on and describe how you will undertake research to find out your target audience for each of these.

Think about **how you reach your target audience(s)** through media and communication channels that include electronic (social media etc.) as well as more traditional means such as print, magazine adverts etc.

Consider how your organisation engages with the local community and labour market, academic institutions, Job Centre plus, national and international markets, return to practice etc. as these are crucial pools of talent to attract into roles.

Don't forget your closest audience, the people who already work in your organisation. Internal recruitment is vital for talent management and retention. What does your internal talent pool look like?

Why your organisation needs an attraction strategy and how to start developing it *2 of 2*

2 Develop your draft strategy

Using the results of your diagnosis, it's time to start drafting your strategy. To help with this, we've provided a recommended structure:

Section	Outline content
1	Context: what environment are you operating in, what are the opportunities and the challenges (draw from your diagnosis).
2	Ambition: set out your strategic vision focusing on where you want to get to.
3	Employer value proposition: set out what your organisation has to offer to new people.
4	Partnerships: who you are going to work with to increase your pool of emerging and future talent.
5	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: how will you reduce bias to widen the pool of people who want to apply for roles?
6	Outcome measures: define what success will look like if you achieve your ambitions and how you will measure/report this.

3 Engage your stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders when developing a strategy is fundamental to ensuring that it is aligned with the goals and priorities of all relevant parties, and that it considers the potential impact on different groups and individuals.

- **Think wider than your organisation**; who are the potential stakeholders in your region such as other Trusts, ICBs, Local Authorities etc. who can help with attraction?
- Determine who the **key stakeholders** are and their level of influence and interest in the attraction strategy.
- Clearly **define and communicate the objectives and benefits** of the strategy. Describe what you hope to achieve and how it aligns with organisational goals and objectives.
- **Build strong relationships** with your stakeholders by understanding their needs and concerns and addressing them in a timely and effective manner.
- **Involve the stakeholders** in the process by seeking their input and feedback.
- **Keep stakeholders informed** about the progress of the attraction strategy and any changes or additions as it's developed.
- **Show appreciation** to the stakeholders for their support and involvement in the development of the attraction strategy.

4 Develop your year one plan

Measurement and evaluation of the effectiveness of the attraction strategy are vital to ensuring success. There should also be an opportunity to review and adjust as needed, involving the stakeholders in the process.

- **Identify key metrics** that will be used to measure the success of the attraction strategy, such as application completion rate and applicant experience.
- **Establish a baseline** for your metrics to serve as a benchmark against which you can measure progress and success.
- **Develop a plan** for collecting and analysing data on the metrics. This should include details such as who will collect the data, how often it will be collected, and what tools or methods will be used for analysis to determine the impact of the attraction strategy.

- **Communicate the results** of the analysis to stakeholders in a clear and concise manner.
- Based on the results, **take action** to make adjustments to the attraction strategy as needed to improve its impact.
- Continuously **evaluate the progress** against the objectives, metrics and make adjustments as necessary.



The following pages provide some further detail on specific aspects of the strategy for you to consider.



Don't forget there is a model attraction strategy framework available on [FutureNHS](#) for you to download and use as a starting point for your own strategy.

Your Employee Value Proposition: What does your organisation have to offer people? *1 of 2*

An Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is the promise you make as an employer to your employees in return for their commitment. This promise includes the total, tangible and non-tangible, benefits and rewards an employee receives when they work for you. For most people, the things that make up a compelling EVP include compensation, work-life balance, stability, location, and respect. Essentially, an Employee Value Proposition should provide incentives that not only reward hard work but create a supportive, inclusive work environment for all.

An EVP is manifested in a combination of statements, tangible benefits, and intangible culture. When thinking about writing your own, consider the following:

- **Describe how your organisation is unique** and what sets it apart from others. This can include things like organisation culture, benefits, location or opportunities for growth and development.
- **Identify what matters to your employees** and make sure your EVP addresses those needs and wants as closely as possible. This can include things like work-life balance, career development, or opportunities for growth and advancement.
- Your EVP should **align with your organisation's culture and values** and should reflect the organisation's purpose.
- Put yourself in the candidate's shoes and **think about what will attract your target audience**, i.e. a school leaver/Gen Z versus an experienced/senior hire. Why is a multi-generational workforce important? (indeed.com)
- **Use specific and measurable language**, avoiding generalities. Make sure the EVP is easy to understand and communicate.
- Your EVP should be authentic and should **reflect the reality of working at your organisation**. Go beyond talking about your "fast-paced work environment" or "dynamic team." Describe the people applicants can expect to have frequent interactions with, or who will be in their team. This information will help them understand their day-to-day dynamic with your organisation. Fully detail the benefits of your roles as this will encourage candidates to apply to your organisation above others.

Your Employee Value Proposition: What does your organisation have to offer people? *2 of 2*



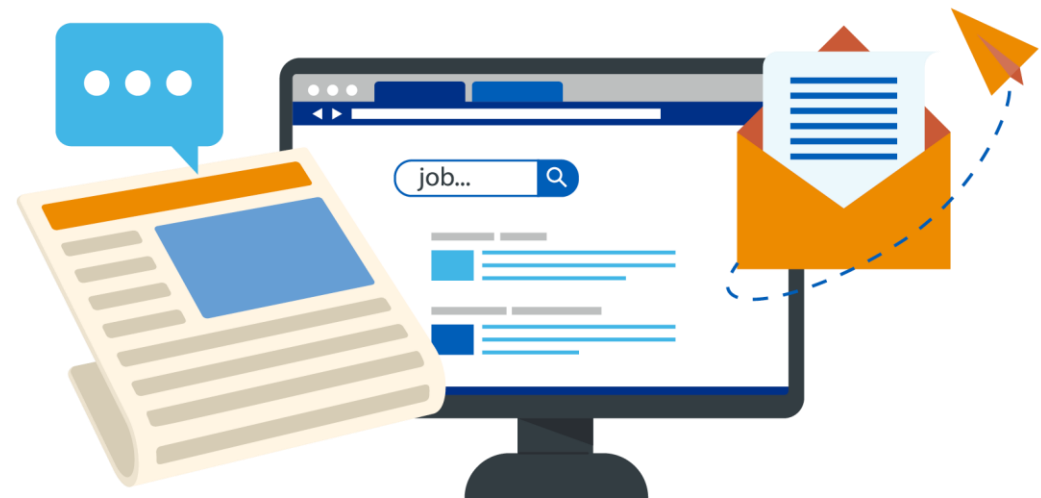
You can hear from the **People Resourcing Manager at The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals** about creating a microsite that shows prospective candidates the overall experience of working in the Trust, not just a description of the job. They also talk about the benefits this continues to have on their own strategy.

You can view the video on our [FutureNHS](#) site

Media and channels to consider for promoting your organisation *1 of 2*

It's important to focus on using channels that are specific to your region and local community as this will help reach potential candidates who are more likely to be interested in working for the NHS. This includes:

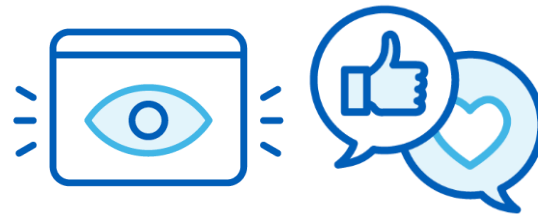
- **Job boards and career websites** that are specifically designed for job seekers are one of the most popular ways to find job listings.
- Whilst **your own website** is a great place to advertise job listings, you should use it **to provide a rounded picture of life in your organisation** and the careers people can aspire to.
- **Newspaper and magazine classified ads** are still a popular way to reach job seekers.
- **Email campaigns** can be used to reach potential candidates and promote job listings to a targeted audience.
- Consider **offering incentives for current employees to refer friends and acquaintances** for open positions.
- **Encouraging current employees to share job listings and organisation culture** on their personal social media can also be effective in reaching potential candidates.
- Many healthcare professionals are members of **specific associations or societies**, and these organisations often have job boards or other career resources that can be used to reach potential candidates.
- **Attending and/or exhibiting at relevant conferences and events** can be an effective way to connect with potential candidates and promote job opportunities.
- Working with your **local community**.



Media and channels to consider for promoting your organisation *2 of 2*

Social media

- One of the biggest, and potentially most complex, channels to use is social media. It offers a number of benefits:
- **Reach:** social media platforms have a large user base, which means you can reach a wider pool of potential candidates. This can be especially useful if you're looking to fill a niche role or targeting a specific demographic.
- **Cost-effective:** recruiting through social media can be less expensive than traditional recruiting methods, such as placing ads in newspapers or on job boards.
- **Branding:** social media can be used to showcase your company culture and values, and to give candidates a sense of what it's like to work at your company. This can help attract top talent who are a good fit for your organisation.



- **Targeted advertising:** many social media platforms allow you to target ads to specific demographics, such as people with certain job titles or in certain industries, which can help you reach the most relevant candidates.
- **Employee referral:** social media can be used as a way for current employees to refer their friends and connections for open positions, which can help increase the chances of finding a good fit for the role.
- **Passive candidates:** social media can be used to reach out to passive candidates who are not actively looking for a new job but might be interested in an opportunity that aligns with their skills and interests.

You should consider a separate social media strategy to fully harness the benefits described above. Think about having members of the recruitment team dedicated to managing it either as a full-time role or as part of the overall team's function.



More information can be found in the Advertising toolkit on [FutureNHS](#).

In general terms, widening participation refers to the practice of eliminating or minimising the influence of personal prejudices or subjective decision-making in the hiring process. Bias can take many forms, including unconscious bias, which refers to the unconscious associations and stereotypes that individuals may hold about certain groups of people.

When writing your strategy, giving due consideration to the demographics of your local community as this can be beneficial in giving you insight into the pools of potential candidates that are available on your doorstep.

Additionally, understanding the demographics of your local population can also help you to identify any potential diversity or inclusion gaps in your recruitment efforts and take steps to address them through your strategy.

The next few pages will look at areas to focus on when considering your local community and what you can do to include these groups. We've also included some advice on the next page from Chelsea and Westminster Hospital to consider.

Remember, these are just some of the areas to consider so please don't take these as being a definitive list, only you know the area your organisation serves so take your time, do your analysis, research and consider carefully the make up of your community to feed into your attraction strategy.



Consider adapting your recruitment process e.g. advertising through a network rather than just NHS Jobs. For example, if we interact with faith networks it's not about a job advert or NHS Jobs, it's a role description and overview of what we're looking for. This can be cascaded to reach the population in a way that we cannot.

Think about writing job descriptions to attract candidates through different routes and enable the shortlisting of CVs. You can shortlist from CVs and at that point ask people to complete an application form – this is easier than asking people to complete an application first which can prove problematic for some groups.

One of the things that we've also learned is around interview questions and inclusivity. We ask interview questions in a very NHS specific way in my experience. One of the things around the refugee work we've done is that if you're trying to help someone understand the role then you need to review the interview questions so that you enable people to perform well in that environment. This also led us on to different methods of recruitment rather than just interviews. I'm a huge fan of practical tests and are there points in recruitment pathways where they work better than a traditional interview.

Head of Recruitment, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

Recruiting from the local community can provide several key benefits for your organisation. Firstly, local candidates are likely to have a good understanding of the area and the local market, which can be beneficial for organisations that rely on local customers or clients. Secondly, candidates from the local community are likely to have stronger ties to the area and may be more invested in the success of the organisation. Additionally, recruiting locally can save on costs associated with relocation, such as moving expenses and temporary housing. Furthermore, local candidates may have similar values and understanding of the community culture, which can be beneficial for an organisation looking to maintain a consistent culture. Lastly, recruiting from the local community can lead to a more diverse workforce, as local candidates are likely to come from a variety of backgrounds.



Working with education: target local schools, colleges etc. and look to proactively plan engagement events to showcase the wide variety of roles and career opportunities, such as apprenticeships, which exist in your organisation and across the NHS. Open days can be found here [Working with Schools: NHS – Inspiring The Future](#)



The community: take part in job fairs, job clubs and have stands in places with high footfall such as supermarkets, shopping centres and football matches. Use posters and other visual materials such as digital TV screens and billboards in places where people will see them passively.

[Norfolk and Suffolk – engaging staff to act as NHS Ambassadors](#)

A project supporting young people and NHS Ambassadors to talk about what is required to work in different roles in Health and Care.

[Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group](#)

A project to educate the public in order to attract more young people and improve diversity within the workforce.



Offering flexible scheduling options, such as part-time or job-sharing, to make it easier for people with care-giving responsibilities to take on employment.



Build strong relationships with local businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to create job opportunities and apprenticeships. Keep an eye on local businesses which maybe closing as these may provide an opportunity to access a talent pool of candidates that may be seeking alternative employment.



Collaborate with community and faith organisations to reach underrepresented groups and provide targeted job training and support. Target faith leaders, charities and third sector providers working with individuals from a range of backgrounds including those from specific equality and inclusion groups.



Contact disability groups: Local Authority Special educational needs advisor teams (SENAT) work with partner organisations and education providers to establish both supported internship and apprenticeship opportunities for candidates with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and Special Educational Needs (SEND).



More information about widening participation can be found in the resources section on [FutureNHS](#).

Measuring the experience of your candidates *1 of 2*

Candidate experience indicators are measures that help to track and assess the experience of candidates during the recruitment process. These indicators can provide insight into how well you are engaging and attracting candidates and can help identify areas for improvement as part of your strategy.

Some common candidate experience indicators for recruitment include:

- **Time to hire:** a long time to fill can indicate that the organisation is having difficulty attracting or retaining candidates.
- **Application completion rate:** a low completion rate may indicate that the application process is too long or complex, or that candidates are not interested in the position.
- **Offer acceptance rate:** a low acceptance rate may indicate that the organisation is not offering competitive salaries or benefits, or that candidates are not interested in the positions being offered.
- **Candidate retention rate:** a low retention rate may indicate that the organisation is not a good fit for the candidates, or that the recruitment process did not accurately assess their fit for the organisation.

- **Candidate satisfaction:** this can be assessed through surveys or other methods and can help identify areas where the organisation is doing well and areas that need improvement.
- **Applicant experience:** applicant experience is candidates' overall impression of your job application process which is influenced by your job description, your job application form, your jobs page and your response to successful/unsuccessful applications.

To get insight into your candidate experience, use your Applicant Tracking System (ATS) for hard metrics such as time to hire and you should also turn to candidates directly for their feedback. One way is through a (paid for) third-party research organisation that can create objective measurements and surveys. Alternatively, create a candidate experience survey yourself, using an online survey tool and send it to candidates and new hires.



We are in a new era of informed decision making and a completely different candidate driven jobseeker market. Candidates have more choice over their career, where and how they wish to work. Dorset HealthCare therefore needs to treat our applicants as customers with an engaging and adaptive processes. A positive candidate recruitment and on-boarding experience will lead to lower turnover, more hires, increased referrals, better applicants, as well as lower costs per hire and time to fill. We're doing this through:

- Feedback mechanisms i.e. monthly new starter feedback
- Seamless end to end process – multiple improvement steps linked to feedback mechanisms, best practice from application to start and induction
- Removing barriers for candidates to make the process accessible to all and for all
- Assessment processes that are appropriate for the role
- Consistent, timely, personable, attentive, inclusive
- Same treatment to unsuccessful and successful applicants “today’s rejection is tomorrow’s hire”
- Developing our brand in this challenging candidate led market – to attract the very best for Dorset.
- Internal vs external recruitment differentiation
- Aiming for the ‘Amazon’ customer service experience.

Head of Recruitment and Resourcing, Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

Creating an effective attraction strategy involves four key steps:

1

Diagnose your current position

Consider data from multiple sources, including your ATS, to target the key areas you need to focus on. Who are the candidates you need to employ?

2

Develop your draft strategy

Use the Model Attraction Strategy Framework to create your draft strategy.

3

Engage your stakeholders

Define your stakeholder group(s) and engage with them to ensure your strategy is aligned with the goals and priorities of all relevant parties.

4

Develop your year one plan

Plan to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of your strategy as well as building in points to review and adjust as needed.



Don't forget there is a model attraction strategy framework available on [FutureNHS](#) for you to download and use as a starting point for your own strategy.



Thank you for taking the time to view this pack.

This is one of a number of tools as part of the overhauling recruitment series. Model documents, case studies and other helpful resources can be found on [FutureNHS](#).