



Induction & development programme for HCSWs

The Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) introduced a 12-month induction & development framework to support new healthcare support workers (HCSW). The programme embeds Trust values and guides staff through their first year and beyond.

Where they were

Staff retention of Health Care Support Workers was a significant challenge, both nationally and within the Trust.

Surveys and exit interviews identified that HCSWs wanted more clarity on what was available to support their skills development and career progression, and to undertake their role competently and confidently.

These factors directly affected workforce stability.

What they wanted

NSFT wanted to invest in the HCSW workforce by building strong foundations for professional and personal growth.

Their aim was to develop a clear, structured career pathway for all HCSWs, ensure staff feel supported from their first week, and embed a strong learning culture that empowers HCSWs to thrive and grow throughout their careers.

“National studies show that a high proportion of this staff group leave within the first year of employment. We recognised the value of formatting an overarching framework to enable staff to identify support and development opportunities in an easily accessible way. We were already using the People Alchemy Platform, so we understood its capability. An additional benefit to using the platform was that we can now measure staff engagement across that vital first year and take a proactive approach and intercept where engagement is low - individually or locally, thus improving retention.”

Kim Boggan, Talent for Care Lead



Their solution

To implement meaningful change, the Talent for Care team joined the Trust's Listening into Action (LiA) initiative, providing a platform to promote existing work and identify areas for improvement. A key innovation was expanding the use of the People Alchemy platform to host a new 12-month induction and development framework.

HCSWs were actively involved through surveys and forums, ensuring their voices shaped the programme. Senior leadership engagement—including CEO support—was crucial for overcoming barriers and securing resources. Their involvement ensured alignment with the Trust's workforce plan, the NHS People Promise, and national strategies.

Their results

Every new HCSW now begins their career enrolled in this framework, which is hosted on the People Alchemy ePortfolio platform.

A recent survey sent to HCSWs across the Trust showed that the work currently underway is closely aligned with the needs and aspirations of staff. The feedback highlighted several key themes that reinforce the direction of ongoing initiatives.

A significant number of staff emphasised the importance of feeling supported and understood by their teams and managers, underlining the value of strong, compassionate leadership.

"Expanding the use of People Alchemy has unlocked significant potential for NSFT. The platform enabled us to design a flexible and creative 12-month framework tailored to the needs of new staff. Collaborating with People Alchemy transformed challenges into fit-for-purpose solutions. Considerable resources were invested in developing the framework, with a dual focus on enhancing staff satisfaction and achieving financial efficiencies. The result is a structured onboarding experience that supports new starters from day one, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development across the Trust."

Kat Munson,
Practice and Development Facilitator

Key results NSFT achieved:

1. The project has delivered meaningful outcomes that support HCSW development and long-term workforce sustainability.
2. Involving HCSWs directly fostered ownership and trust, leading to more relevant changes.



3. Conversations to support career pathways and development opportunities have boosted morale and encouraged progression.
4. Embedding the project within Trust strategies ensured sustainability and alignment with broader goals, reinforcing their commitment to valuing and retaining this vital staff.

Summary

The Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust implemented the People Alchemy ePortfolio in 2022, initially for the delivery of the Care Certificate programmes.

Moving from a paper system to an advanced automated digital platform saved time and money while improving the user experience and completion rate of the Care Certificate. They have since also started using it for competencies in the Liaison & Diversion group, and for medication management.

The potential functionalities of the platform and ease of use for their HCSWs made it the natural choice to use for the new induction and development framework.

Your next step

Similar projects can be hosted on the People Alchemy ePortfolio platform at your NHS Trust. It provides the right technology, guidance, and flexibility needed to ensure you get the outcomes you define, and your staff receive the training they need in a format that works for them. To find out more and develop your own bespoke solution, get in touch today.

Your next steps →



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