

I Care...Ambassador

Principles and policy

1. Who does this document apply to?

All *I Care...Ambassadors*, employers and employer partnerships signing up to the revised *I Care...Ambassador* model (2012).

2. Background

The development and expansion of *I Care...Ambassador* services is one of the key activities outlined in the sector Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Skills for Care 2011). The *I Care...Ambassador* principles and policy contained in this document link with the overall ambition and elements of this strategy. Since the first care ambassador scheme was launched in 2003, the initiative has spread and services have been praised for their strength in promoting careers in the adult social care sector. The economic downturn has had a major negative impact upon care ambassador activity across the country, resulting in a significant reduction in services. There has also been a lack of consistency and understanding about what the role of a care ambassador is and what care ambassador services can offer. The new *I Care...Ambassador* principles and policy are designed to provide a more consistent, coordinated and sustainable approach to support the provision of care ambassador services.

3. The aim of *I Care...Ambassador* services

To present a positive image of social care careers, thus supporting recruitment and retention across the social care sector.

4. Key outcomes

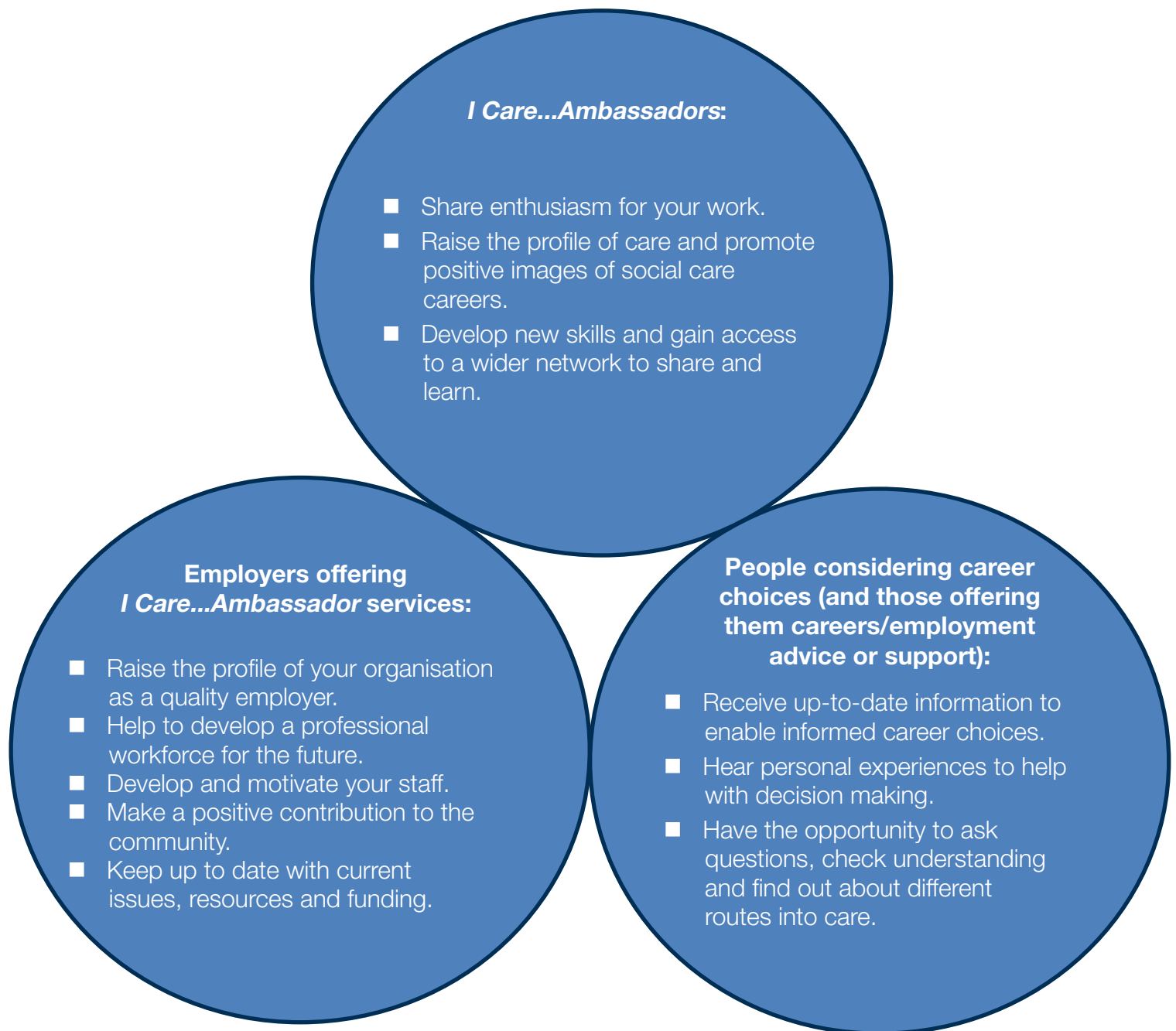
- To elevate the image and status of social care and affirm professionalism.
- To sell the value and rewards of a career in care.
- To promote career and development opportunities.
- To improve public awareness of the social care sector and target a diverse range of individuals who may have skills which can enhance the sector.
- To support innovation in recruitment and retention.

5. What is an *I Care...Ambassador*?

An *I Care...Ambassador* helps to motivate and inspire people to consider care as a possible career path. *I Care...Ambassadors* have direct experience of the sector and provide their time to deliver services to help people better understand the sector. They share their own life and career journeys with those considering careers in social care. From a first-hand perspective, they directly communicate what the care sector has to offer. *I Care...Ambassadors* bring a career to life. They can take their audience inside a profession with many opportunities that are varied, challenging and rewarding.

6. Benefits

For more information about the benefits of an *I Care...Ambassador* service, please refer to the diagram in the benefits section of this document.



7. Key principles

7.1 As an *I Care...Ambassador* you will:

- Work in or have experience of a formal or informal social care role, or be in a social care support or ancillary role which engages directly with people who use the care service, so you understand their needs and work to improve their lives or wellbeing.
- Work for, or be aligned to, a social care employer or employer partnership which is signed up to the revised *I Care...Ambassador* model. (People who use services, and carers and volunteers, can be aligned to an employer or employer partnership.)
- Agree to maintain your *I Care...Ambassador* online record.
- Agree to complete the *I Care...Ambassador* welcome modules before you start your role as an *I Care...Ambassador* and to continue to develop your knowledge and skills via the online resource bank and other methods as may be outlined by your employer.
- Agree to abide by the *I Care...Ambassador* code of conduct (item 10 below).
- Commit to giving some of your time to the *I Care...Ambassador* service. (The amount of time and activity involved can vary, please check your expected commitment with your employer.)

7.2 As an employer providing *I Care...Ambassador* services you will:

- Deliver social care services or support as a primary function of your business.
- Ensure that all of your *I Care...Ambassadors* abide by the principles (7.1 above) and the code of conduct (10 below).
- Ensure that any *I Care...Ambassador* services you provide are financially sustainable.
- Ensure your organisational details are kept up to date within the online register and that records of ambassador activity are maintained.
- Support *I Care...Ambassadors* to complete the *I Care...Ambassador* welcome modules before they undertake any activity and to maintain their knowledge via the resource bank.
- Collect and return data and information to support Skills for Care's ongoing evaluation and development of *I Care...Ambassador* services.
- Conduct your *I Care...Ambassador* service and engage with the *I Care...Ambassador* hub in ways that reinforce the positive reputation of the *I Care...Ambassador* model, and of Skills for Care as the model's owner.

7.3 As a partnership of employers providing *I Care...Ambassador* services you will:

- Be a collective of social care employers, each of whom delivers social care services or support as a primary function of their business.
- Have a formal agreement which outlines that the organisation registering is commissioned by the employer members in the partnership to act in a lead role and register ambassadors on their behalf.
- Conduct the affairs of your partnership in a manner consistent with good business practice, and with the generally accepted standards of probity and good governance.
- Ensure that all of your *I Care...Ambassadors* abide by the principles (7.1 above) and the code of conduct (10 below).
- Ensure that any *I Care...Ambassador* services you provide are financially sustainable.

- Ensure your organisational details are kept up to date within the online register records of ambassador activity are maintained.
- Support *I Care...Ambassadors* to complete the *I Care...Ambassador* welcome modules before they undertake any activity and to maintain their knowledge via the resource bank.
- Collect and return data and information to support Skills for Care's ongoing evaluation and development of *I Care...Ambassador* services.
- Conduct your *I Care...Ambassador* service and engage with the *I Care...Ambassador* hub in ways that reinforce the positive reputation of the *I Care...Ambassador* model, and of Skills for Care as the model's owner.

8. Key responsibilities of *I Care...Ambassadors*

- To raise the profile and status of social care careers.
- To share experiences of working within the sector with people who may be considering a career in care, or helping others with careers or employment advice or support.
- To provide information in a non-biased way, promoting relevant resources as appropriate, such as Skills for Care's career pathways e-tool.
- To promote positive images of social care and help change dated or negative perceptions.

9. *I Care...Ambassador* person criteria

As an *I Care...Ambassador* you should:

- have passion and enthusiasm about the social care sector
- have had practical experience within a social care setting
- be willing to give your time and travel within your local area (or further as agreed)
- have a proactive approach to maintaining your skills and knowledge
- have good communication skills and confidence in speaking to others
- be non-judgemental, tolerant and treat people with dignity and respect.

10. *I Care...Ambassador* code of conduct

As an *I Care...Ambassador* you will commit to:

- treating the service offered as a professional assignment
- behaving in a manner that represents your organisation and the sector in the best possible light
- being punctual and giving adequate notice if unable to attend any agreed activities. (The period of adequate notice should be agreed between parties delivering and receiving the service at the outset)
- refraining from any conduct or wrong-doing which may bring the profession into disrepute, or behaving in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to be an *I Care...Ambassador* or act as a role model.

In doing this you will be expected to:

- use appropriate and acceptable verbal and non-verbal language
- respect the rights, religious or similar beliefs and cultural differences of individuals and uphold equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices.

11. Sustainability policy

It is recognised that *I Care...Ambassador* services can be funded and supported in many different ways. In signing up to provide *I Care...Ambassador* services, employers and partnerships of employers make a firm commitment that they will not provide any type of *I Care...Ambassador* service without first ensuring that its provision is financially sustainable. (Please refer to the guidance about setting up and operating a service for more information on how to assess and ensure the financial sustainability of *I Care...Ambassador* services.)

To reflect the true contribution of those supporting and funding a service, the term 'free' should not be used to promote or describe *I Care...Ambassador* services or events. Instead, the words 'fully funded' 'part-funded' or 'co-funded', should be used in any promotional literature or communication.

Skills for Care will not arrange, handle or receive financial transactions for *I Care...Ambassador* services.

12. Gifts and rewards

Any gifts or rewards should be part of an agreed arrangement between the *I Care...Ambassador* service and its 'customers'. There may be occasions when individuals may wish to pass on a small token of appreciation to an *I Care...Ambassador* as a thank you. All gifts and rewards should be declared to the *I Care...Ambassador* service employer or employer partnership. It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value (e.g. worth more than £10).

13. Services

I Care...Ambassadors may offer some or all of the following services:

- formal presentations
- informal talks or discussions
- interactive group activities
- information stands
- supporting placement opportunities
- guided workplace visits
- publicity/media
- other specialist services.