

# Employer's guide to recruitment

## Part 4: Support your employees



### Before they start

The first day of a new job is daunting. Ease nerves for new employees by writing to them before they start and letting them know:

- where they should go and when
- who will meet them and how that person relates to their job
- what they will do on the first day and the hours they will be expected to work
- if you have a company dress policy or if casual attire is fine

This can be particularly beneficial for individuals with autism or mental health difficulties, or for young people who may lack experience in a working environment.

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### Day one

First impressions count. A structured induction process will help new starts settle into their role more effectively.

Explain what they will do on the first day, week and month. It might also help to have an employee handbook so everyone is clear on the organisation's policies and procedures, including things like use of phones and social media. A new employee then knows exactly what is expected of them and what they can expect of you.

Don't overlook simple pointers such as how to use equipment, where the toilets and kitchen are, who they will be working with most closely and the person to speak to if they have any questions. You should consider allocating a 'buddy' to support them in their first few weeks and beyond.

If you have taken on an apprentice who will spend an initial period with a training provider, remember to give a refresher induction when they begin their role with you.

### Offer a buddy

During induction it is useful to assign new staff a 'buddy'. This is a colleague who understands their area of work and can help them with any questions they have about the organisation, department or their job role.

This can help new recruits settle into the job and bring them up to speed with their role. The buddying role is more informal than that of a direct line manager so allows people to ask questions that they might not want to discuss with their manager. You should also let employees know who to speak to if they have any concerns about support from their buddy.

A good buddy is someone who understands the job role and is approachable. The buddy should be patient and able to dedicate time to supporting the new start.

Buddying systems are great for all new starts to your organisation, but can be of particular support to groups who may lack work experience or have lower confidence levels (such as younger people or those who have been out of work for a while).

Remember that your employees will have had different experiences and challenges outside work. For example, care experienced young people may not have experience of the structures of working life and may not have positive role models in their life to encourage them with their employment. For these young people, it is even more important to have support in the workplace through a buddy or similar, particularly when they are first starting out. They may need more support to understand the basic expectations of work, such as timekeeping and dress code.

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### Mentoring

Mentoring is different from having a buddy. Quite often the mentor will be someone more senior and can be from within or outwith the organisation. The mentor's role is to coach the employee to develop their skills, overcome challenges and help them develop their own career.

Organisations, such as the Scottish Mentoring Network, can provide guidance and resources to help you get started. You may wish to have a look at their Mentoring Toolkit.

There may also be specialist or sector specific organisations who can put you in touch with mentors or help you set up your own mentoring scheme. For example, Equate Scotland have developed a module to help you to set up a mentoring scheme specifically aimed at supporting women who work within traditionally male-dominated science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) sectors. This module is being delivered by West Lothian College, for more information contact Lynn Bain at [lbain@west-lothian.ac.uk](mailto:lbain@west-lothian.ac.uk)



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### Case study - Balfour Beatty

Infrastructure group, Balfour Beatty is actively taking steps to raise awareness of the need for gender equality in its industry, encouraging females to choose a career in construction.

Mentoring has become a key element in supporting our employees, particularly apprentices.

One step the company has taken has been participation in the SDS 'Train the Trainer: Mentoring Women in STEM Apprenticeships' course.

Hector MacAulay, Regional Scotland & Ireland Managing Director, Balfour Beatty, said: "We recognise the value that mentoring can bring in supporting employees to reach their full potential.

"Our expert women help shape the world we live in. The SDS course helps establish a training framework for mentors which gives the practical tools, knowledge and resources to effectively mentor and support female apprentices and employees."

### Providing support

Don't presume your employee will speak up. They may be unsure of what support they can expect or feel uneasy about asking. Reassure new employees that they can raise any concerns about issues affecting them in or outside of work in confidence.

Be aware that some employees may have additional challenges outside of work which could impact them in the workplace. For example, care experienced young people may be experiencing stress related to their financial or living situation, or you may have employees who have caring responsibilities outside of work.

You should make sure all new starts know who they can speak to if they need extra support at work.

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If you appoint someone who is disabled you have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure their ability to do the job is not impeded.

Reasonable adjustments could include the following:

- being flexible with break times or working hours
- providing a dedicated desk — not a hot desk — for someone with a social anxiety disorder
- installing an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person or special equipment for someone with arthritis
- structured working days for individuals who have autism

See our funding section for information on the help available to disabled people through [Access to Work](#), government funding which can help to cover costs for any adjustments at work such as specialist equipment or software.

### Ongoing support

Regular meetings with your new worker can allow them to raise any concerns or need for further support. You should regularly review any formal or informal support arrangements you have in place in discussion with your employee.

Training opportunities can also underpin and improve their workplace experience. To find out more about putting your employees through an apprenticeship, please see [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot).

### Supporting employees

“At Scottish Water, we have implemented agile working practices in the belief that work is what you do, not where you go to do it. Every job role is categorised as fixed, fluid, field or free and employees are given appropriate technology to support their job role type. This allows more flexible working both in terms of when and where employees carry out their work and while this is of particular benefit to employees with parental or caring responsibilities, it allows employees more control over their work-life balance and to feel engaged and supported by the organisation.”

**Julia Stevenson, Strategy and Employee Experience Lead, Scottish Water**

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### Employer kitemarks/accreditation

There are a number of initiatives that employers can sign up to which can help you publicly demonstrate your commitment to fair work practices and supporting different groups within your workforce.

This can be a helpful way of demonstrating to potential employees and to customers that you are a fair, inclusive and supportive employer. Each initiative has its own eligibility criteria, which means you will need to evidence your practices or support before being accepted.

A summary of each initiative is below, for full details please follow the link to the website.

Organisation	Summary of Initiative
<a href="#">Stonewall Diversity Champion</a>	Demonstrates inclusion and support for LGBT staff within the workplace
<a href="#">Scottish Business Pledge</a>	Commit to sustainable growth, innovation and fair working practices
<a href="#">Living Wage Accreditation</a>	Awarded to employers who pay the Scottish Living Wage to their employees
<a href="#">Investors in People</a>	Help to understand and improve the ways you manage your people and create a positive working environment
<a href="#">Happy to Talk Flexible Working</a>	A practical strapline for advertising your commitment to flexible working
<a href="#">Disability Confident</a>	Help to recruit and retain disabled people
<a href="#">Carer Positive</a>	Help to support and retain people with caring responsibilities
<a href="#">Business Disability Forum</a>	Help to employ and do business with disabled people

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### Help available

Our Equality Team can provide further support at [Equality.Apprenticeships@sds.co.uk](mailto:Equality.Apprenticeships@sds.co.uk)

- [Barnardo's and Action for Children](#) — can provide advice on supporting care experienced young people.
- [Big Plus](#) — find a tutor to help with reading, writing or using numbers
- [Equate Scotland](#) — can help employers to recruit and retain women, support the career development of female employees and develop a fair and open workplace culture.
- [Gov.uk](#) — provides information on [Access to Work](#) and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- [National Autistic Society](#) — can provide advice on supporting employees with autism
- [Scottish Mentoring Network](#) — find mentors or access training and resources about becoming a mentor
- [See Me Scotland](#) — provides advice on supporting employees with mental health problems.
- [West Lothian College](#) — can deliver a training module on how to set up effective mentoring networks for women in STEM industries.

