



ihcp Employers Charter

Working in the independent
Health and Social Care Sector



**You Care
We Care**



Foreword



Welcome to the ihcp 'Employer Charter' for our members, their staff and anyone looking for a career with independent health and care providers across Northern Ireland.

The sector employs over 30,000 people to work with adults in Care Homes, Homecare and Day Care settings and contributes substantially to the NI economy, the whole Health and Social Care system and most importantly to the lives of the individuals being cared for.

Ihcp wants the sector to be recognised for the quality work it delivers through treating employees fairly, respectfully and in compliance with employment legislation and health and social care standards. The charter has been produced through discussion with our members and with the support of the Labour Relations Agency.

We have asked our members to sign this charter to demonstrate their commitment to being an employer of choice in Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pauline Shepherd".

Pauline Shepherd
CEO ihcp

Introduction



ihcp is a non-profit making organisation representing private, voluntary, charitable, and church affiliated providers of health and social care. Our members include nursing and residential homes, housing with care schemes and homecare (domiciliary care).

Services are provided for older people, vulnerable adults, including those with learning disabilities or mental health associated issues and people with other specialist needs.



Health and social care describes the wide range of services and support that enables individuals to live in their own home or in community settings.

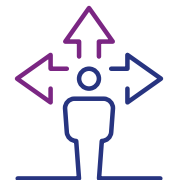
The aim is to maintain and promote the independence and well-being of individuals, to enable them to live as full a life as possible, in whatever setting that best suits their needs. Health and social care services should be timely and tailored to meet specific individual needs as well as considering the needs of family and friends with caring responsibilities.

ihcp is committed to supporting and helping our members demonstrate their workplace environment supports, develops, and motivates all staff to fulfil their potential. In promoting our commitment, we will encourage members to sign up to the principles and practices of the ihcp Employers Charter outlined overleaf.

This Charter is a 'living' document subject to periodic review. Any proposed amendments will be made in consultation and agreement with the signatories.

**Labour
Relations**
agency
improving employment relations

ihcp
independent health
& care providers





Principles of the ihcp Employers Charter

Recruitment, retention and staff support

Our recruitment processes will reflect the values we strive for in our employees, including openness, fairness, trustworthiness, empathy, and honesty.

We are committed to supporting and continually developing our staff by investing in learning and development, promoting health and wellbeing initiatives, providing career opportunities and delivering high standards of health and safety.

We value the support of and use of agency staff however we aim to minimise usage of agency staff by embracing the principles of this Charter.





We will:

- ✓ Ensure our processes enable us to source the person with the best skills and personality for the job or position. We recognise that experience is helpful, but it does not necessarily replace the values and compassionate instincts required in a caring role.
- ✓ Have in place fair employment policies in accordance with employment law and best practice.
- ✓ Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes promote inclusivity and that factors including, age, gender, race, religious belief, sexuality and disability should be no barrier to success.
- ✓ Ensure that our recruitment methods are appropriate for the role with flexible methods of selection, communication, interviews, and other activities.
- ✓ Provide a job description that explains the overall purpose of the role and a person specification detailing the skills and experience necessary.
- ✓ Provide a structured induction programme at the start of employment, mentorship and individual support, as far as possible, during an employee's probationary period.
- ✓ Provide learning and development opportunities to equip employees for their role.
- ✓ Provide a learning and development plan specifying mandatory training and the requirement for refresher training as appropriate.
- ✓ Support employees to register and continue to meet the requirements of their regulatory bodies i.e., Code of Conduct for both the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and have regard to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice for Employers.
- ✓ Highlight the responsibilities to our members, as employers, of ensuring that international recruits receive fair treatment and support and that members adhere to the *Code of Practice for International Recruitment, March 2023*.
- ✓ Provide employees with a support network within the team and management structure where they work.
- ✓ Guide and support employees to further their career in the health and social care sector.
- ✓ Engage with employees and listen to what they have to say on an individual basis and as part of the wider staff team; what employees feel and say matters to us.
- ✓ Engage with employee appointed representatives whether that be under an informal arrangement, voluntary Trade Union agreement or statutory recognition as contained in The Employment Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 as amended by the Employment Relations Order 2004.

Click Here





Job security, career progression and work/life balance

We believe in offering secure employment by means of contracts of employment which comply with Northern Ireland's employment legislation supported by clear and accessible policies and procedures.

We are committed to providing employees with career pathways and believe in nurturing individuals' talents, skills, and confidence.

We recognise the importance of achieving a balance between work and home life.





We will:

- ✓ Issue employment contracts reflective of the minimum number of hours required to work each week.
- ✓ Discuss the need for any additional hours work needed in advance and pay appropriately for extra hours.
- ✓ Use zero hours contracts only when no reasonable alternative is workable to deliver services effectively. These will be mutually and explicitly agreed with employees
- ✓ Continue to review and manage the use of zero hours contracts and discuss whether there are more suitable options available with staff.
- ✓ Provide support through mentorship, discussions at supervision, performance support appraisals, professional and personal development and enhancing skills.
- ✓ Provide information regarding employment opportunities in work and assist employees with planning career progression.
- ✓ Acknowledge that having a good work and home life balance is crucial to our mental and physical wellbeing.





Health and wellbeing

We are committed to promoting a safe and healthy working environment that fosters a positive culture of care that looks after the physical and mental wellbeing of employees.





We will:

- ✓ Provide the necessary training to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- ✓ Adapt to employees individual needs and circumstances, recognising that on occasions reasonable adjustments may be considered as we strive to support employees return to or remain in the workplace.
- ✓ Comply with our employer obligations to consider reasonable adjustments for those staff with disabilities.
- ✓ Endeavour to support the wellbeing of employees at all stages of their working lives.
- ✓ Partner with other healthcare services, signpost accordingly and ensure that staff have access to a full range of support services.





Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Equality, diversity, and inclusion – we are committed to enabling productive and positive working environments, embracing equal opportunities, cultural competency, inclusivity to all and enhance creativity and innovation.

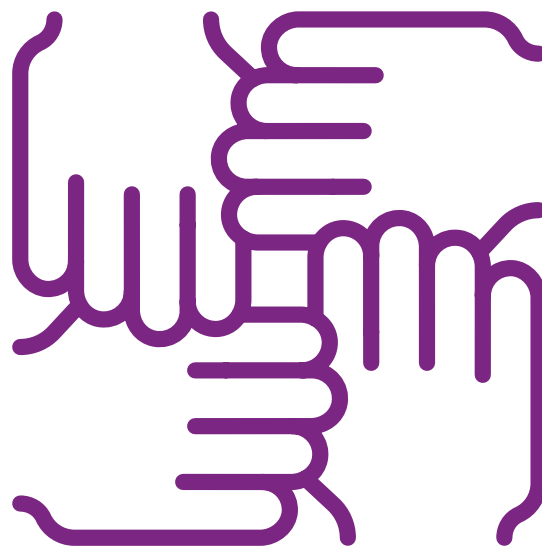
We support government and departmental employment policies which promote diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace.





We will:

- ✓ Ensure a diverse workforce that best meets the needs of our communities and service users by having a wide range of skills and experience.
- ✓ Ensure equality and fairness embracing the ethos of this Charter and the diverse needs of our service users and changing environments.
- ✓ Foster an inclusive working environment to maximise the potential of employees and provide equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment to avoid unlawful discrimination.
- ✓ Comply with relevant employment legislation and promote best employment practice.





ihcp support to members

Ihcp is committed to supporting our members to deliver on this Charter and will partner with a range of organisations to assist members. Our support includes:

- ✓ Partnership working with the Labour Relations Agency to deliver webinars and training to our members covering issues such as good employment practices, employment law and resolving workplace disputes.
- ✓ Partnership with various organisations that deliver a range of employee benefits including health insurance, training and employee assistance: for example, Westfield Health and Incorporate Benefits LLP.
- ✓ Training and information sessions delivered by organisations including Carson & McDowell Solicitors, The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Alzheimer's Society, Public Health Agency, Queens University of Belfast, University of Ulster, Department of Health.
- ✓ Support the 'My Home Life' leadership programme.
- ✓ Engagement with psychology services to deliver health, well-being, and resilience services within the sector.



Please sign and return to: liz@ihcp.co.uk

Signature:

Job Title:

Date:
