Torbay – thinking outside the box to meet the employment challenge

**Torbay and South Devon Foundation NHS Trust** finds major benefits in recruiting end to end with NHS Jobs.

Recruitment manager Patricia Spruce is delighted her team can utilise a single online recruitment service to fill vacancies at Torbay and South Devon Foundation NHS Trust.

Patricia has worked in NHS recruitment for more than 10 years – the last four with Devon – and has been using NHS Jobs since its launch.

All the trust’s vacancies are advertised via the official NHS online recruitment service, which provides a seamless platform for both managers and candidates.

NHS Jobs does away with the need for colleagues across the trust to regularly contact the HR team to be appraised and updated on recruitment progress. “Before, managers would ring us all the time for updates and candidate information,” says Patricia.

“The NHS Jobs system is a lot more efficient. Shortlisting is completed online, and interviews scheduled easily without duplication [of applicant forms or details]. Managers have access to candidate information and because it is web based you can access information at any time.”
“We advertise all our jobs on NHS Jobs.”

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Candidates also benefit from improvements to the NHS Jobs system implemented in 2014, making it possible for jobseekers to apply for numerous jobs at once, book their own interview times, and follow their application progress online in real time.

Ensuring sufficient staff are in post is an ongoing business. “We advertise all our jobs on NHS Jobs from domestic to consultant roles and the process is very much the same,” says Patricia.

Whilst pre-employment and reference checks may differ for medical posts, the overall recruitment process is a lot smoother and vastly quicker, she adds.

“Our recruitment time is around 30 days … that reduces the money we spend on agencies to cover vacant posts.”

Before the trust started using NHS Jobs, manual inputting of data and communication via email, post and telephone could mean up to 80 days between a shortlisted candidate being interviewed and the completion of pre-employment checks if they are made a conditional offer.

The average recruitment time from advert to person in post is improving all the time. “Our recruitment time, lately, is around 30 days from conditional offer to pre-employment checks and contract issued,” says Patricia. “That reduces the money we spend on agencies to cover vacant posts.”

A major recruitment challenge for Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust faces is its geography. Covering a huge area of South Devon from Dartmouth to Dawlish, the trust is one of the largest employers in the south west, employing more than 6,000 staff in a range of services.
NHS Jobs plays a vital role in securing staff quickly, safely and cost effectively

As a popular holiday destination the 375,000-strong resident population, is swelled by an additional 100,000 summer visitors, some of whom may require medical care during their holiday.

South Devon is also a favoured retirement destination, which means the Trust serves an above average elderly population.

“We are an innovative trust and one of the few Integrated Care Organisations, combining acute and community health care with adult social care.”

However what they share in common with other health regions across the country, is a nursing workforce fast approaching retirement age. The combination of these factors present particular challenges recruiting for both experienced and newly qualified nurses.

“People see this area as being at the end of the country and very rural, therefore it’s difficult to recruit,” says Patricia. “Some people also see us as a retirement area rather than a place to start their career, therefore we have to let people know how great it is working and living in Torbay, including the fact that there some high performing schools and colleges, plus it is one of only a few areas in the South West with several grammar schools to choose from.

“We are an innovative trust and one of the few Integrated Care Organisations, combining acute and community health care with adult social care, so we have a lot to offer those starting out in their nursing careers as well as experienced nurses.”

The trust thinks outside the box, explains Patricia, taking advantage of its location as a holiday resort to attract staff through Open Days and return to practice initiatives which target visitors and a more experienced nursing workforce who may be interested in moving to the area.

“We have a great work/life balance and have a lot to offer living by the coast and moors.”
NHS Jobs is an adaptable end-to-end recruitment tool

As a flexible recruitment tool, NHS Jobs plays a vital role in securing staff quickly, safely and cost effectively. “We can complete safer recruitment checks because it links into ESR [electronic staff register], it’s a lot more user-friendly than ESR and means we’re compliant on our recruitment checks.”

The current version, NHS Jobs 2, was updated in 2013 to offer even greater cost-saving potential as an end-to-end recruitment tool for NHS Trusts keen to meet Lord Carter’s recommendation and reduce spending on temporary and agency staff. “When NHS Jobs 2 was launched, we invested a lot of time in tailoring the system to meet our needs,” says Patricia. “Now you can adapt NHS Jobs to what you need it to do.”

CASE FILE: Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust became an integrated care organisation in October 2015. Its 6,000 staff provides acute health care services from Torbay Hospital, plus community health services, community dental services, patient transport services and adult social care. The trust serves a population of approximately 375,000 – which can swell by an additional 100,000 visitors over the summer months.

- Average recruitment time from advert to recruitment completed: 30
- Average time to confirm appointment: 18 days (date of interview to recruitment checks completed)
- Percentage of NHS Jobs filled in last six months: 81

- NHS Jobs advertises, on average, 30,000 vacancies and processes approximately 400,000 applications from across England and Wales each month.

- Visit [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk) for latest health posts with Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust and across the country.