

## Online recruitment - revolutionising practice in the healthcare and public sector

Written by Lauren Mackelden, Online recruitment magazine

Getting large institutions to take on new ideas can be rather like stopping a proverbial oil tanker - it can take a very long time. But some of Britain's largest institutions, the NHS and the public sector are now taking online recruitment very seriously indeed, say NHS Jobs and WCN, as seen below.

The NHS is one of the world's largest employers with around 1.3million people England and Wales alone - that is one in 23 of the working population. The NHS has embraced the online recruitment concept with both hands with its own dedicated service, NHS Jobs ([www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)), serving NHS trusts across England and Wales. Launched at the end of 2003, NHS Jobs has grown to become one of the UK's most popular recruitment websites and now attracts over 4 million visits to the site each month, which in the last year generated more than 3 million online applications.

The service has had a major impact on how the NHS recruits staff. More than 450 employing bodies, known as trusts, have moved from an almost totally traditional paper application form based process to one where many now recruit almost entirely online. A spokesperson Ashford & St Peter's Hospital NHS Trust commented "Less than 5 percent of our applications are now received offline." From vacancy advertising to managing online applications, shortlisting, interview scheduling and feeding new employee records into the national electronic HR system, NHS Jobs has equipped trusts with the tools they need to achieve this online. "Online recruitment has really delivered for the NHS", says Sian Thomas, joint acting director at NHS Employers, owners of NHS Jobs. "In as little as four years NHS Jobs has helped the NHS in England save an estimated £250 million in recruitment advertising spend alone." According to NHS Employers' research, trusts have experienced a reduction in their administrative burden and a noticeable cut in the time it takes to fill vacant posts, which has in turn decreased spend on temporary and locum staff.

The service is popular with applicants too, providing a single source for opportunities across the NHS. A member of the recruitment team at University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust recently commented "It's a one stop shop for NHS recruitment, if individuals are looking to

work for the NHS, NHS Jobs is widely known as the place to go to." Sian Thomas is clear about the future of online recruitment in the NHS. "The proposition that we are improving care for patients through delivering more efficient recruitment online is great motivation. Continual changes and shifts in technology and the healthcare recruitment market will no doubt throw up challenges over the next few years, but these are challenges that we believe NHS Jobs is fully equipped to tackle."

### E-recruitment set to transform public sector services

In her opening statement of "E-Recruitment Projects in the Public Sector: A Government Guide to Best Practice" ([www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk](http://www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk)), written by Charles Hipps, managing director at WCN Plc, Jill Ryder, Director General Leadership People Strategy and HR at the Cabinet Office, notes that since March 2005 the e-recruitment market has evolved at a considerable speed. She goes on to say that, the number of products and services available now are increasing almost on a daily basis and e-recruitment is also becoming much more sophisticated. She sees e-recruitment as an integral part of the vision set out by the Government for transforming public sector services. She further points out that public sector bodies sharing services will get maximum benefit from investment in e-recruitment technology. Hipps from WCN Plc, comments, "Our experience as one of the leading providers of e-recruitment solutions to the public sector advocates precisely what Jill says. This could not be more true than in the work we are doing with Hampshire Local Authority where 12 of the 15 Local Government Authorities in Hampshire have joined together to serve a population of over 1.8 million people to offer a wide range of job opportunities to candidates through one single website."

"WCN's e-recruitment solution for Hampshire means that the 12 participating authorities are reducing administration and advertising costs, while promoting a strong cohesive image of Local Government career opportunities and reaping the benefits of co-ordinated campaigns, shared talent pools and internal mobility across the Hampshire region,"

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**Charles Hipps,  
WCN Plc**

continues Hipps. Candidates benefit too as they need only to access one single location in order to apply for positions across all 12 participating authorities and across all disciplines. Richard White, Head of Resourcing at Hampshire County Council says "Hampshire based its business case for WCN's regional recruitment portal and e-recruitment software on a return on investment of over 150% over the duration of the contract - planned savings of over £1.2 million across the 12 authorities are envisaged." Hipps adds that: "The stringent requirements of 'fair and open' recruitment and the challenges faced by the Public Sector to deliver more from less through e-enablement and 'joined-up' Government, have resulted in Public Sector e-recruitment being in many cases more professional and innovative than in the Private Sector."

The success of online recruitment in these sectors should be applauded, after all, saving money in recruitment for healthcare and the public sector is good news for all of us!

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