

The background of the entire page is a photograph of healthcare workers. On the right, a woman with curly hair, wearing blue scrubs and a name tag, is smiling. On the left, another person in blue scrubs is partially visible, looking down. The image is overlaid with large, diagonal, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of purple and teal.

How to nurture your team during constant change

Care Homes HR Guide

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How can care homes recover from and adapt to turbulent times?

The coronavirus pandemic had a devastating impact on the health and social care sector.

Staff wellbeing plummeted drastically during this time, which continues to create significant challenges for HR teams and people managers in care homes.

They must renew their focus on employee engagement and wellbeing, while maintaining attention, as always, on recruitment. In addition, they also need to ensure mandatory training is completed for new and existing staff — something which has been compromised during these turbulent times.

Meeting these challenges is difficult in a sector where the payroll process is often still reliant on spreadsheets. Human capital management (HCM) software can significantly reduce administration and improve productivity, but many staff have low confidence levels in using these solutions to their full potential.



Care home residents
accounted for
40% of all Covid
deaths during the
first wave of the
pandemic.¹



[1] Nuffield Trust – 17 February 2021

We're here to help

We've created this guide to help people managers at care homes discover new ways to cope with difficult circumstances while continuing to provide quality care. We'll share how using an all-in-one HR software solution can save time and simplify processes – helping you to transform both mindsets and results for your people and your residents.

More than half of health and social care staff, including care home workers, experienced a mental health disorder during the first wave of the pandemic.²

[2] UCL – 11 March 2021

Discover the three top HR challenges for care homes – and the steps you can take to overcome them >



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Challenge #1: Overcoming the talent shortage

Recruitment is a perennial problem for the care sector. Staff who work with vulnerable people must be carefully vetted and trained, but low wages mean care organisations have long struggled to compete in a crowded job market.

In a recent study by GOV UK, most of the employers interviewed said they believed that a key reason for this was increasing competition in recruitment with other sectors such as hospitality and retail. They felt that these sectors were often more appealing, as they were able to offer higher wages for less responsibility and physical strain. Some employers also spoke about being in competition with the NHS and feeling unable to compete with the higher salaries it was able to offer. Almost all the employees in the sample also felt that pay in social care was comparatively low, and a few were actively looking to move into competing sectors.

Source: [GOV UK](#)

Over the last few years, this problem has intensified. Low morale is a major cause of staff attrition, as many care home workers joined 'the great resignation' in the spring of 2021 and onwards.

Today, the cost-of-living crisis is placing pressure on wages, as employees seek pay rises to continue to cover basic necessities.

Care organisations often compete for qualified candidates with the NHS, which can offer better compensation and benefits. Financial stress is forcing many to abandon the care sector entirely for employment in other industries, such as retail, that can offer higher salaries.

How to find – and keep – staff

Although care homes may be unable to offer better pay, there is an area where they can compete in the recruitment marketplace: the employee experience.

This starts even before day one, by using the right technology to create a professional and efficient recruitment process which can improve your brand awareness and word-of-mouth applications.

Choosing intuitive cloud-based HR software that incorporates an applicant tracking system (ATS) can help you smoothly manage job candidates throughout the hiring pipeline. It enables people managers to automatically carry out vetting checks,

such as right-to-work details, to speed up your recruitment process and avoid candidate drop-off. And you can build an efficient onboarding process that ensures all necessary documents are signed and training is completed before candidates start work.

The same tech can also help you boost staff retention. HR software that integrates with your training management platform will provide one central hub to maximise the potential of your workforce. Streamlining HR tasks with the right tools will give time back to your HR team, allowing them to carry out strategic projects to support employee engagement and wellbeing.

How to save your HR team time

- > Cut admin, fast, by implementing an all-in-one HR software system that seamlessly combines your HR and payroll functions.
- > With the right easy-to-use software, your HR team or people managers can manage everything from recruitment and onboarding to rotas and timesheets.
- > By reducing repetitive manual tasks through automation, you can free up time for them to focus on value-added tasks – ultimately boosting productivity, efficiency and staff engagement.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY:

How we freed a full-time HR employee from labour-intensive admin

One hospice we work with was recording annual leave with data cards for its 500 employees. This was a slow and painstaking process, which meant one employee within the HR team had to process holiday requests. Our all-in-one HR software automated the whole process and freed up the employee, allowing her to spend more time speaking to people and adding value to the company.

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Challenge #2: Handling reporting and compliance requirements

Care homes are highly regulated. Organisations must keep up with a range of employee and training compliance requirements on an ongoing basis – an administrative burden that places additional strain on already taxed staff.

Care homes providing clinical care face more stringent regulations, as they must meet NHS Agenda for Change requirements. These requirements relate to pay and conditions, terms of employment, and human resources policies, adding another level of complexity to management and reporting.



Streamline your reporting

Most HR teams at care homes are already stretched and cannot afford to invest significant working hours into monitoring their organisations. But the right technology can relieve this pressure and do it for you.

Create one single source of truth in your organisation with all-in-one HR software. This will reduce your risk of errors and provide key data insights that can be used for reporting. And your software automatically creates reports each month, removing the laborious and potentially error-prone process of manually building these by taking data from multiple spreadsheets. You can add bespoke

reporting to comply with specific data capture needs, such as Agenda for Change requirements.

You can further simplify HR processes with centralised HR software that features customisable workflows. These automate repetitive administrative tasks such as authorising absences or approving timesheets – meaning less time chasing staff to complete and return documents, while enabling compliance. The right all-in-one HR system can even automate your expenses authorisation process, making expenses management swift and tailored to your exact requirements.

Get accurate data

Specialist care home HR software can free up staff and remove the risk of human error.

- Manage your payroll by eliminating costly errors with seamless data flow between your HR and payroll functions, helping you ensure that everything is accurate and up to date with legislation.
- Support compliance by making it easy to track and prove your organisation's legislative compliance, including NHS requirements, and keep your data secure.
- Streamline administration through easy-to-use software to speed up your HR function and free up staff.

Challenge #3: Scheduling staff

It's essential for care homes to efficiently schedule staff. That often means covering 24-hour shift rotas, especially for care homes providing clinical care. You need digital tools that can keep up with all your needs, including managing staff members who serve multiple roles within your organisation.

Volunteers are also a key piece of the puzzle, providing care homes with valuable additional services. Managing

and scheduling volunteers, a separate community with different dynamics to paid staff, comes with additional challenges.



Keep everyone on schedule

To speed things up, choose HR software with scheduling functionality that integrates with your HCM platform and incorporates the level of complexity your organisation demands. Make sure it includes a database for volunteers, accounts for dual and multiple staff roles, and helps you easily manage 24-hour shift coverage.

You can lower your risk of human error in scheduling with all-in-one HR software that provides one point of data entry, and one source of data. A system with self-service functionality will empower your staff and volunteers to manage their own absences, holidays and availability.

How to encourage staff to use a self-service HR system

Self-service systems come with major benefits, but adoption is a common concern. Here are three steps you can take to help everyone get up and running quickly.

1. **Choose the right software:** Make it easy for everyone to get on board by first finding a system that's truly user-friendly.
2. **Educate your people:** Teach your staff and volunteers the benefits of your new system. For example, they'll be able to check when they can book holidays – and get them approved quicker.
3. **Provide training:** Make sure your software provider can help get your staff up to speed in the initial days and weeks: once people know what to do, the new system will quickly become second nature.

Care homes must strengthen their HR teams to rebuild – and grow

The right HR technology can support your people to serve your residents.

The care home sector has been battling volatile conditions for some time – but sophisticated HR technology can handle the unique complexity of care homes and provide the simplicity they need to adapt to change.

Many organisations are still struggling with a mountain of paperwork, with data stored on multiple, easily lost spreadsheets.

HR staff are burdened with administration, unable to work on vital areas such as recruitment and retention. Digital solutions can save time and money, boost productivity and accuracy – and crucially, start doing it fast.



A topic that has been discussed in depth at UK Care Week is the main barrier for care homes implementing technologies, with discussions around how care homes are finding roadblocks with initial costs, including upskilling the workforce to use them. 57% of providers have cited budget as the main barrier to digitisation, whilst almost half have said that they lacked digital skills.

Source: [Care Home Professional](#)

A centralised, all-in-one HR system can meet your organisation's specific needs, lifting some of the weight from your HR staff and motivating your workforce. Easy-to-use self-service functionality can empower your people, while your HR team or people manager spends more time on value-added tasks like conducting job interviews and supporting staff wellbeing initiatives.

Making processes more efficient provides a better employee experience, so everyone can focus on the important and rewarding work of caring for vulnerable people. It means you can develop a more positive culture and improve wellbeing – even if you're still facing difficult times.

How to find the right solution for your care home

HR software can have a transformative effect on your organisation – but only if it can meet your unique requirements. Look for a solution that can provide you with the following.

Visibility and control

An all-in-one system with a single integrated database will provide simplicity and clarity on all your HR functions. Make sure it includes flexible tools and modules that can be tailored to your requirements, including integrated payroll and reporting to eliminate errors and provide insights.

An excellent user experience

To ensure high levels of adoption, look for a system with a streamlined, simple-to-use interface.

Technical support

Make sure your software is quick and simple to set up, so no expensive consultants are required. Speak to your HR tech partner about their plans for your future: ask if they will create a development roadmap for you, and gauge whether they have a true desire to understand your goals and support you over the long term.

Market-leading, purpose-built software and support for care homes from IRIS

Our software and services for care homes can help you look after your staff, cut down on administration, and provide the transparency you need to meet your reporting and compliance responsibilities — so your people can spend more time doing what they love most about their jobs: caring for vulnerable people.

 **IRIS** is trusted by over 120,000 organisations worldwide, including care homes

As an experienced software provider in the care home sector, we regularly engage with our customers within our own care home sector community. The community enables everyone to share knowledge and best practice while ensuring that we listen to their needs. It means we can provide future-proofed products that enable our customers to run their care homes successfully, for many years to come.

We know you may not have the time or expensive expert support to integrate HR technology. That's why we have everything you need to get your HR and payroll teams up and running, with plug-and-play solutions that are easy to integrate and use.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY: How technology helped Mountbatten increase productivity

Mountbatten had several requirements for a HR system, with one of the most critical being automation and workflows. The team were spending hours of time each week completing laborious, manual processes and fundamental HR tasks needed to be streamlined. Cheryl told us,

"IRIS Cascade has allowed us to increase productivity with customisable workflows and dynamic organisation charts. We can automate repetitive admin tasks and have enabled our employees to take control of their own administrative tasks with employee self-service. The team here have been on board with Cascade since day one, and even our Chief Executive would tell you they love the system!"

Cheryl Blackley, HR Operations Lead, Mountbatten

Get started today

We're here to support your organisation so it survives and thrives during turbulent times. To take your next steps towards a happier, more efficient care home, visit the [IRIS HR Success Planner](#). This easy-to-use diagnostic tool will help you assess your current HR systems, as well as where you aspire to be.

From there, you can have a discussion with one of our experienced growth specialists who can suggest the products and services that will best help you reach your aims.



IRIS Software Group

Heathrow Approach
470 London Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL3 8QY

0344 815 5555

iris.co.uk/solutions/healthcare

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