



A very Happy New Year to you and your teams.

How is your team feeling about the start of the new year? We're hearing a mix of reactions from the people we speak to. Many are motivated, excited about the year ahead, setting career goals, and planning development. Others are finding the time of year challenging, both personally and professionally, and many are navigating a mix of feelings.

For leaders, this presents an opportunity to start the year with intention. How are you supporting and motivating teams who are in these mixed places? Simple steps like checking in individually, celebrating small wins, setting clear priorities, and creating space for honest conversation can help everyone feel seen, supported, and ready to start 2026 with confidence.

As we move through the start of the year, dates like Blue Monday (or "Brew Monday") and Time to Talk Day are good opportunities to check in with teams, spark conversations about wellbeing, and reinforce a culture of support.

As we move into the new year, the care sector continues to face high vacancy and turnover levels, even as the wider job market stabilises. In adult social care in England alone, there are around **111,000 vacancies**, with the sector's vacancy rate nearly **three times higher** than the UK average.



Turnover is equally significant, with around **three in ten care roles changing hands each year**, and roughly **335,000 people leaving their posts annually**.

These numbers are not just statistics. They represent real people feeling stretched, reconsidering their future in care, or moving between roles because they are not seen, heard, or supported in ways that matter.

The new year is often a time when people reflect on their career paths, and **research suggests that 40–45% of professionals consider changing jobs in January**, which brings both possibilities and challenges for employers. It is a chance to attract fresh talent, engage those seeking new challenges, and show that your workplace truly values, supports, and invests in its people. At the same time, if attention is not given to employee experience, recognition, and growth, some of your best staff may be tempted to leave, adding to turnover and staffing pressures.

The 2025 workforce report from [Skills for Care](#) provides detailed insights into these challenges. While it offers a clear snapshot of the current landscape, it also prompts an important question for employers and sector leaders: what will 2026 bring? By reflecting on these trends now, we can start building workplaces where people feel valued, supported, and inspired to stay.

Recruiting is tough, but keeping great people depends on the experiences they have every day at work. Frontline professionals tell us that while care work is deeply rewarding, it is also physically and emotionally demanding. Feeling undervalued or unheard, more than workload alone, drives dissatisfaction and departure.

Employers who lead with empathy and insight build workplaces where people want to stay, grow, and thrive.

It is not just good business sense, it is **human centred leadership**.



Supervising nursing students effectively is a key part of developing future social care professionals.

Students benefit from structured support and guidance during placements, yet not all managers feel confident in providing it.

This webinar helps registered managers reflect on best practice, strengthen mentorship skills and ensure students have a positive, valuable placement experience.

👉 [Supervising and Supporting Nursing Students – Skills for Care](#)

Are you based in or near Bristol? Understanding care fees and funding can be challenging, yet it is essential for running a sustainable service. The **Bristol Care Fees Seminar**, hosted by RWK Goodman and 39 Essex Chambers, on **Tuesday, 10 February 2026**, offers practical guidance for managers and finance leads to gain clarity, manage fees confidently, and stay up to date with best practice.



UK employees took an average of **9.4 sick days** in the year to 2025, the highest average recorded in recent years, underlining the importance of proactive wellbeing support at work. However, workplaces that implemented strong wellbeing programmes, flexible working, and supportive absence policies saw **significantly lower absence rates**, demonstrating the tangible benefits of investing in employee health and engagement.

Sickness absence can be stressful for both staff and managers. Supporting employees effectively during absence improves wellbeing, engagement, and productivity, yet many workplaces struggle to manage it consistently. This upcoming ACAS webinar provides practical strategies for handling sickness absence sensitively and fairly, helping managers create a supportive workplace culture.

👉 [Sickness Absence – ACAS Webinar](#)

On January 20th, Croner-I is hosting a webinar with an **Employment Tax Director** focusing on live tax problems that require careful research and judgement.

The session is ideal for managers and finance teams looking to make confident, informed decisions and apply practical solutions.

👉 [Researching Tax Queries – Croner](#)



### **Friday the 2nd of January was World Introvert Day.**

It was a day to celebrate and recognise the quiet strengths that introverted employees bring to the workplace, from deep focus and thoughtful problem solving to empathetic listening and independent work.

Understanding different personality types helps us create a culture where everyone can thrive. When we allow people to work with their natural strengths rather than against them, we support productivity, wellbeing, retention, and overall team performance.

When we remove barriers and adapt expectations to individual strengths, everyone benefits. For a thoughtful look at introverts at work and how they contribute to teams, you can read more [here](#).

Even small steps in recognising and valuing different working styles can make a big difference, not just for introverts but for the whole team. People who feel safe, seen, and supported consistently bring their best contributions.

Research shows that in organisations where inclusion is genuinely embedded into culture, staff stay nearly **four years longer** on average and **80 % of employers** report that prioritising inclusion directly improves team productivity.

There are many ways to foster inclusivity, from considering personality types and supporting people with disabilities to ensuring equality across race, religion, gender and sexuality.



One area of growing focus is **neurodiversity**. It is estimated that **15 to 20% of people are neurodivergent**, meaning a significant portion of any workforce may think, learn and process information differently, yet many workplaces are not fully equipped to support them effectively.

On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February, ACAS are hosting a webinar exploring practical ways to create workplaces that genuinely support neurodiverse colleagues. The session will cover adjustments, inclusive practices and strategies to make your organisation a more understanding and empowering environment.

[Inclusive workplaces: making changes to better support neurodiversity](#)

January is often a time of reflection and planning, with teams thinking about what they want to achieve this year and how they can make it their best yet. Taking the time to consider priorities, team needs, and opportunities for support now can shape how the year unfolds. Success in 2026 will come from empowering teams to focus on goals aligned with their motivations, recognising their strengths, and creating an environment where they feel supported to take ownership of their work. Even small moments of guidance, encouragement, or clarity can have a lasting impact on performance, engagement, culture, and overall wellbeing. By approaching the year with intention and empathy, leaders can help their teams navigate challenges, celebrate achievements, and grow together throughout 2026.

#### **We'd love to hear from you:**

What are your team's goals for the year, and how do you see your workforce shaping the way you grow, succeed, and provide quality care? When the right people are in the right roles, with the right support and opportunities, it can

transform not only growth, but also the culture, motivation, and impact of your teams.

 **Thought for the month:**

As we get into the swing of 2026, we're excited about the opportunities ahead and the ways we can continue to grow and support our clients and candidates. We look forward to continuing to make new connections, expanding specialist talent pools, and helping companies build strong, effective teams.

Equally, we are committed to continuing to nurture the relationships we've established, using our integrated approach to understand individuals' evolving workforce needs, tailor advice, shape recruitment strategy, and deliver solutions that align with business goals.

In 2026, our focus will remain on a reflective and proactive approach that strives for continuous improvement, ensuring every interaction adds value, supports candidates, and helps our clients build resilient, inclusive, and high-performing teams.

 **Further reading/watching:**

 [International Day of Education: Embracing AI to Expand Learning for All](#)

 [Reasonable Adjustments: How to Get Them Right](#)

**Vacancies slowing your service down?**

We can pre-screen candidates fast and get them in front of you for interview — reach out now and let's solve your hiring gaps, fast.

Warm wishes for the month ahead.



*Connecting compassionate care providers with skilled professionals to build strong, values-aligned teams that enhance care quality and service outcomes.*



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