



Title: “How we make UK hiring the fastest globally”

1. **Chair’s welcome:** the Chair, Emma Hardy MP introduced the session by providing context including why faster hiring is critical, key issues that need resolving, how many vacancies do you have, how long it takes to hire an individual and what would the impact be if this time could be halved.
2. **Present:** Emma Hardy MP (Chair), Lord Lucas of Crudwell, Rt Hon Dame Maria Miller MP.
3. **Speakers:** (see also accompanying slides):
 - a) Keith Rosser, Chair of the Better Hiring Institute

Keith is a labour market expert with over 20 years’ experience. He runs Reed Screening an employment vetting business he founded in 2012 for Reed, the British family-owned recruitment business. He is a Non-Executive Board Member with an arm’s length body of UK Home Office and a Non-Executive with the Scottish Government. Keith is Chair of the Better Hiring Institute, an entity set up as a partnership between UK Government and industry to help modernise hiring, and Chair of JobsAware a social enterprise that has helped over 2m job seekers and flexible workers in need of help.

- Hiring has been in the spotlight since the start of the pandemic.
- Response to lockdown showed that there is a new way of working and hiring.
- Our aim is to make UK hiring the fastest globally.
- Producing a brief that will be submitted to ministers.
- This is not a technology problem, but one with tradition and custom.
- Broad overview of the 10-Point Plan for Faster Hiring.
- The work of the Better Hiring Institute is to create Hiring standards to not only align and standardise, but to modernise and emphasise the role of digital and how we adapt vital policies such as safeguarding to be more representative of our digital world.
- A recent survey of 100,000 references sent found that only 61% came back, 81% of which were dates only.
- Open banking and HMRC Gateway should be able to validate somebody’s work history at the click of a button. Tradition and custom means that we are not currently doing that.
- Transparency is a problem, leading to candidates dropping out of the hiring process.
- Economic inactive members of the labour market are also an important component of this.

- b) Lisa Scales, Talent Acquisition Director at Royal Mail

With over 25 years in the recruitment industry Lisa is one of the rare breeds in recruitment to have worked across agency, vendor, and client side over the period of her career – with extensive experience of managing high performance teams in delivery of volume recruiting she has worked across professional services, FMCG and utilities. Having joined the very British Royal Mail from the global giant Nestle, Lisa is now responsible for delivery of talent acquisition to the frontline of 80,000 postal workers through to the remaining 50,000 supporting functions across both flex and permanent workforces recruiting circa 40,000 people across the year including seasonal peaks.

- Our organisations are not about products, but about people.
- Talking from a private sector perspective, but Royal Mail is very close to the public sector.
- Most employees are on the front line and trust on the doorstep is valued.
- Deliver to 31 million houses across the UK is quite an operation.
- 1 in 175 jobs in the UK are a Royal Mail job.
- The end-to-end process to hiring requires around nine pieces of communication before coming through the door. Trust at the door diminishes when there isn't somebody in place to deliver those letters.
- Not in the position to stand still. There is something here about technology, cultures, behaviour; all about organisational change across industries in the UK.
- If you have a delivery office, and somebody is not there to work, that may be somebody that misses a NHS letter.
- Externally, there needs to be more join up. Different levels of hiring are crucial, but there could be a much easier way to check people's ability to work in these roles.
- About 7,000 vacancies now to begin work in the next six weeks or so.
- There is no job framework about how work needs to happen in the future. The agility of somebody being able to work somewhere, move their credentials and work elsewhere, is hindered by industry. This means that people who could be working are latent and not doing so.
- Time to hire was around 67 days, now centralised all recruitment and reduced time to hire down to 31 days.
- Importance of getting people into work earlier so that they can start earning money, can pay their rent, and afford to live in the increased cost-of-living.

c) Mike Ruddle, Commercial Director at NHS Professionals.

Mike joined NHS Professionals (the flexible workforce staffing arm of the NHS) in 2019, initially leading on the design of the company's transformation programme. Throughout his 25-year staffing industry career he has worked with a diverse range of public and private sector organisations to design and deliver scalable workforce solutions. During the pandemic, he led the company's response to deliver the workforce required for the NHS Test & Trace and National Vaccination programmes bringing tens of thousands of individuals to the pandemic frontline. From July 2020, as Chief Commercial Officer he leads on working with NHS and ICS leaders to implement resourcing solutions that optimise workforce recruitment and retention.

- Timely discussion with the NHS releasing its Long Term Workforce Plan.
- Significant targets and ambitions in there that strike at the heart of this session to recruit and retain staff.
- Much more strategic recruitment approaches in place currently.
- Really good thinking going on with reference to flexible working.
- Setting the context:

- NHS is behind the curve in terms of recruitment with long-winded application forms, rigid competency frameworks with limited attention to value and fit for the NHS.
- Recruit against requisitions means that there is an absence of a talent pool strategy for people who have applied but been unsuccessful.
- Complex job descriptions mean that applicants may not see where they fit into the organisation.
- A well-publicised vacancy rate of about 124,000 FTE staff.
- Employer brand has taken a knock, sentiment was high during the pandemic, but this has not been capitalised upon; British Social Attitude survey puts satisfaction with the NHS at a record low.
- The sector is highly regulated, and understandably. Patient safety is everything. However, moving around the NHS is not factored into this, and the process of doing that is inefficient, with half the time to hire being taken up with employment checks.
- Paper documents are still required and checks need to be made in person.
- Frameworks make the landscape much more complex, and it would be great if they would work together to develop a more harmonised set of standards.
- The NHS wants to be a modern, forward-thinking employer, maximising the employer brand.
- Smarter hiring is essential. Must provide a better experience for candidates, making it easy for them to apply for work.
- Collaborative workforce solutions that allows the workforce to be deployed in different places where required.
- Attracting younger workers of the labour market who are already tech savvy.
- This is all about culture and winning hearts and minds.
- The aim is to get quality candidates through quicker and not compromise patient wellbeing. Digital implementations will be important in shaping this whilst ensuring that candidates that come through are suitable.
- The NHS aims to reduce time to hire from 10 weeks to 6 weeks.

Open questions and discussion

1. On the 10-Point Plan for Faster Hiring, what is being done from an economic inactivity perspective? Is there anything more that you would add to the list.
2. NHS hiring nurses from countries such as the Philippines, who purposefully over train nurses. How does that feed into a long-term strategy?

KR responds that there are 10-Point Plans for Fairer Hiring and Removing Barriers that address economic inactivity. Because they are so important, they sit within their own plan, looking at groups such as women, people with disabilities, people with care commitments, etc.

EH shares KR's and MM's sentiments, speaking about a constituency group called Chronically Employed, offering more hybrid and remote options.

MR - the NHS has already indicated its intention to reduce reliance on international recruitment (as stated in the recently published NHS Workforce Plan), in place of a 'growing our own' strategy – a view also shared by Labour Government. Greater focus will therefore be applied on training and education – with associated funding made available to support the new approach.

3) In addition to KR's point on dropout rates due to the mis-selling of jobs, is there anything in the plan for hiring managers to tighten up on this?

4) A lot of the answers lie in the private sector. One investment bank that has had success in completing a hire in a day, where all the stakeholders were marshalled to make sure that they were playing their part in getting that hire over the line. There are a lot of good practice in place that could feed into this.

5) Main question is about DBS checks. Some local authorities stipulate that these are redone every three years. How do you make DBS checks moveable? With the changes in filtering rules, there is no link to updating DBS checks. What is the solution to make sure the system works?

6) Shares the problems highlighted by the speakers. Having previously worked in different sectors with settled and pre-settled workers, the share-code mechanism, can this be extended out to other mechanisms in improving right to work and sharing.

7) Looking at these ten points what I have noticed is that we are talking about recruitment but not exploitation. Immigration law is not fast, it is slow. AA is dealing with 236 cases of nurses recruited overseas and have been exploited, locked into contracts. Unless we include immigration law as one specific point, this will leave people subject to exploitation. The right to work system does not work. A lot of employers do not understand it. The danger is that people go into illegal working because the legitimate route is too slow.

8) Candidate passports need to change to reflect always on monitoring, that the flags are always coming through to this passport to flag up immediately to this passport. Not just for candidates moving around internally, but also from business to business. Have to consider what Gen Z and future generations will want to engage with employers.

9) Talked a lot about UK's productivity issues, and what organisations need, have overlooked what applicants want. The applicant needs to trust the process, this needs to be considered.

10) 20% of entire population has a disability, the largest minority. Difficult to get into work if you are disabled. Everything is about connecting the dots and inclusivity to offer these reasonable adjustments. Must also look at more inclusive practices when interviewing and creating long-term opportunities. This will get you better candidates. 83% acquire a disability during working life.

11) Trying to change underrepresentation in environmental health. Only 4% of professionals are from minority groups. Unconscious bias slows down the recruitment process. We have started to use blind CVs from the beginning of the year. This means that people get an interview based on merit and qualification, and the number of people getting interviews has increased.

12) As a small business recruiting for health and social care and with reference to the gap in the number of nurses for the NHS, how do small businesses support the NHS?

Conclusions

LS, Royal Mail – These are not siloed issues. On the mis-selling of jobs, a bias creeps in and we assume that everyone understands the terms and language that we use. We spend a lot of money on branding but want unbiased job descriptions and adverts. Need to adopt a framework in the future.

MR, NHS Professionals – untapped pool of talent with the disabled. Used to run a consultancy looking at organisational change and from the NHS perspective EDI is right but when done well you can tap into a huge workforce. It is incumbent on us as industry leaders to be better at this. Amanda Pritchard has been talking about implementing a new approach to EDI. On modern slavery and recruiting internationally I know first-hand the rigour that is placed on us to ensure we undertake the appropriate due diligence on the agencies which we work with overseas, to ensure they are ethical and responsible.

KR thanked the room.

Further to Lisa's point, the idea of a framework for this would be great. The Better Hiring Institute was set up between Government and Industry to achieve these points and encourage all to contact the inbox at secretariat@betterhiringinstitute.co.uk and get involved.

Re-use of DBS checks, accept the point. Have been told by the DBS that this is on the agenda. Mechanism to share answers (Babcock point) would be good. There is a challenge in share codes, those in digital poverty find this difficult. Ake's point is right, we see exploitation because the system is slow. Virtual APPG session will look at this.

Alina, we are looking at what modern hiring looks like for young people. Want to engage with some younger ones.

Non-Parliamentarians attendee list

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Better Hiring Institute	Keith	Rosser
Better Hiring Institute	Cal	Wright
JobsAware	Lauren	Edwards
Royal Mail	Lisa	Scales
NHS Professionals	Mike	Ruddle
Open University	Simone	Rickard
Your World Recruitment Group	Aimi	Kearney
Investors in People	James	Burch
Investors in People	Paul	Devoy
Migrants at Work	Aké	Achi
Supported by Rebecca	Rebecca	Latham
Sheridans	Anita	Pali
Arla Foods	Melanie	Williams
Arla Foods	Vicki	Bryant
iWork	Julia	Kermode
Experian	Alina	Howe-Jones
Proxima	Christine	Morton
Keystream Group	Julia	Dixon
383 Projects	Hannah	Holmes
Islington Council	Rob	Stoner
Let's Talk Disability	Emma	Shepherd
SOAS University Of London	Shantel	Earle
Youth Employment UK	Joshua	Knight
G7 Talent Solutions Ltd	Gary	Franklin
Optima UK Inc. Ltd	Lorraine	Boorman
Orka	Cassie	Watson
FCSA	Chris	Bryce
Medacs	Caroline	Grant
Thera Trust	Daniel	Nash
National Gallery	Jessica	Francourt
Kier Group	Nerida	Rooney

APSCo	Shazia	Intiaz
Capita	Catherine	Smith
People Care Services	Dudley	Sawyers
Virgin Money	Oonagh	Oconnor
Virgin Money	Tamara	Dewhurst
Equiniti	Lauren	Moore
Support Solutions	Olufunke	Ososami
Apollo Home Healthcare	Kerriann	Carter
Unity Care Solutions	Debbie	Walter
Unity Care Solutions	Laura	Guiver
EPM	Beth	Alberga
Buckingham Futures	Ketan	Dattani
Kawib Solutions	Winifred	Kagere
Substantial	Molly	Wilson
My Homecare	Alexander	Gillies
Advantage Travel Partnership	Xian	Mayes
Foolproof	Amelia	Lyth
Turning Point Scotland	Caron	Duffus
Recruiter Magazine	DeeDee	Doke
United National Bank	Abiola	Bello
Hays Specialist Recruitment	Victoria	Fry
House of Commons	Hannah	Steinbach
Federation of Small Business	Emelia	Quist
Careers Collective	Sally	Everist
Elysium Healthcare Ltd	Shaun	Cox
Whitecrow Research	Dee	Allan
Surrey Choices	Laura	Turner
Wychwood Consulting	Andrew	Henderson