

# Setting up and running an Ambassador Service in Northern Ireland Guidance

July 2014



***Ambassadors for Careers in  
Care (NI) Service***

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# Setting up and running an Ambassador Service

## 1.1. Background, aims and outcomes

### Who does this document apply to?

This document applies to all Careers in Care Ambassadors, employers and employer partnerships signing up to the Ambassadors for Careers in Care (NI) Service (here after called NI Ambassador Service).

### Background

The NI Ambassador Service developed out of a two year project called - Recruiting a World Class Workforce (RWCW). The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) in partnership with the Skills for Care and Development partners (Skills for Care, Care Council for Wales and the Scottish Social Care Council) established the project to support recruitment across the care sector using ambassadors to promote and encourage careers in care.

The initiative aimed to establish an Ambassador Service model across the UK with at least 1,000 Ambassadors recruited, inducted and registered before the end of the project in March 2014. In Northern Ireland, through engagement with social care and early years' employers, the NISCC successfully recruited and trained over 50 Ambassadors by the project deadline meeting the NI target.

### What is an Ambassador Model?

The ambassador model supports social care and early years' employers and their staff to engage with individuals making career decisions and the people who advise them. This initiative has also had significant impact on helping employers get the right people into the right posts and in helping to retain them in post.

Requests for ambassadors are made by organisations such as; school, colleges, training providers, careers and employment support organisations. These are the intended "customers" and target audience of Ambassador Services.

## **The aim of NI Ambassador Service is;**

To present a positive image of the care sector, thus supporting recruitment and retention across the social care and early years sector.

## **Key Outcomes of the Ambassador service/model.**

- To elevate the image and status of the care sector and affirm professionalism.
- To sell the value and rewards of a career in care.
- To promote career and development opportunities.
- To improve public awareness of the care sector and target a diverse range of individuals who may have skills which can enhance the sector.
- To support innovation in recruitment and retention.

## **1.2. What is an Ambassador Service and how to set up an Ambassador Service?**

An Ambassador Service is an employer-led service and can be delivered by employers directly or through an employer partnership. Employers agree the level of commitment and type of activity they will provide as part of their Ambassador Service.

It is important that employers have a clear plan for the service and it is recommended that a group is formed to shape, agree and monitor the plan. Participants could come from key leadership or management roles, employees, people who use services and key external stakeholders.

### **How to set up an Ambassador Service:**

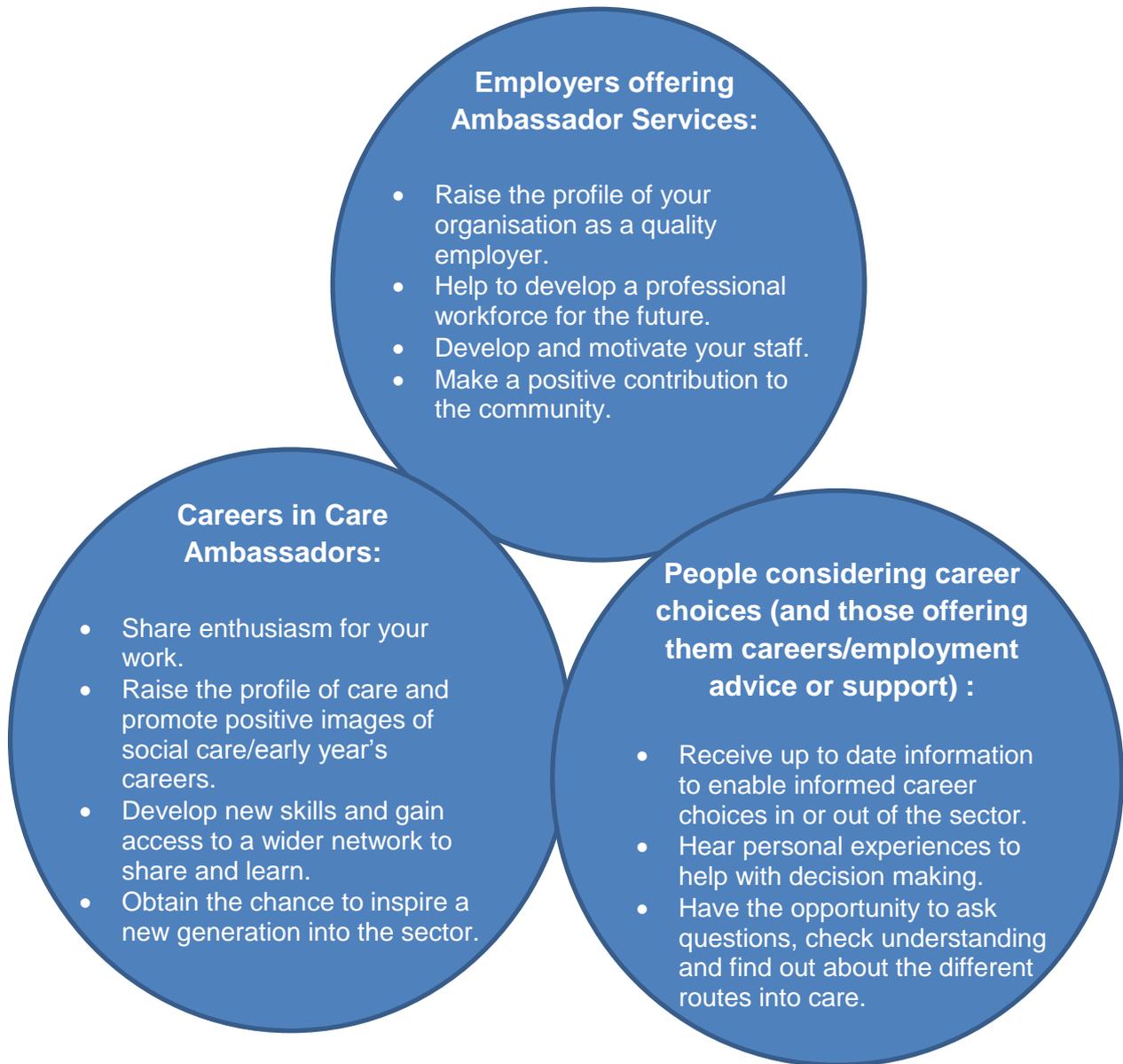
- All employers wishing to deliver Ambassador Services must register with the NISCC by completing an employer registration form. (See Appendix B, page 18). This allows the NISCC to verify that they are a legitimate social care or early years' employer. The form asks for organisational details of the employer registering including a named Co-ordinator who will receive communication about requests to deliver services. (See Appendix A).
- Prior to registering, all employers must read the **NI Ambassador Principles and Policies and confirm that they have read it and are willing to sign up to the set of principles.** (See Appendix B) The Principles and Policies define the key criteria and expectations for the NI Ambassador Service. They form a clear and consistent framework to support a sustainable way of promoting careers in the social care and early years' sector in Northern Ireland and across the UK. They have been developed, tested and agreed by social care and early years' employers.

- Employers who register to join the NI Ambassador Service are agreeing to provide staff to become Ambassadors. All Ambassadors must complete an Ambassador registration form which must be approved by the employer Co-ordinator/Manager. (See Appendix B). The information on the registration form determines the level of activity and spread of commitment of each Ambassador and is used to help select appropriate Ambassadors when requests are received as follows;
  - Contact details
  - Age range
  - Organisation name
  - Job title
  - County (county prepared to provide activity within)
  - Career route/background into the sector
  - Experience – areas of care they have worked in
  - Audience – what type of audience they are prepared to work with
  - Services – type of activity they are prepared to provide
- Employers agree to ensure that all their Ambassadors abide by the Principles and Policies.
- Employers agree to ensure all Ambassadors complete Ambassador training (using the Welcome App) prior to undertaking activity. (See Page 9).
- Request from customers for Ambassadors received by the NISCC will be redirected to employers who are available to provide staff. Requests may also come direct from employers from their own localities.
- Employers negotiate and manage all arrangement/activity directly with customers – this can include; deciding on dates and timing of a talk for example or the exact nature of the activity they are prepared to provide.



L-R, Feargal Mellon, NI Ambassador/Project Worker, NIAMH, Colum Conway, CE, NISCC, Rosemary McGarry, NISCC Participation Group, Helen Minford, Head of School, Belfast Metropolitan College, Agnes Lunney, CE, Positive Futures, Patricia Higgins, Director of Regulation and Standards, NISCC and Trish Rocket, Lecturer/Tutor, Belfast Metropolitan College at launch of RWCW, 21 March 2014 at E4, Belfast Metropolitan College.

### 1.3. What are the benefits of joining the NI Ambassador Service?



#### **1.4. The role of the NISCC and sustainability of the NI Ambassador Service:**

The NISCC has worked in partnership with a range of social care and early years' employers across Northern Ireland to successfully establish a NI Ambassador Service. The NISCC will continue to support the NI Ambassador Service and continued sustainability of the Careers in Care Ambassador model within Northern Ireland by promoting the NI Ambassador Service as the primary source of expert speakers and the real voice of social care and early years in Northern Ireland for those making career decisions and the people who support them.

The NISCC will do this by;

- Promoting the service and availability of ambassadors within Northern Ireland through the NISCC website, the NISCC Face-book, twitter and email/post.
- Providing staff to support the NI Ambassador Service whose role will be to liaise with employers and ambassadors to ensure the service remains sustainable.
- Maintaining a register of employers and Ambassadors who have joined the NI Ambassador Service.
- Verifying employers and services and monitoring registration to ensure that only appropriate organisations and individuals are registered.
- Acting as a central point for Ambassador requests, ensuring employers/ambassadors are contacted in a timely manner and made aware of requests.
- Maintaining, reviewing and developing the Ambassadors for Careers in Care (NI) Resources Bank and ensuring employers and Ambassadors have access to these via the NISCC website.
- Providing information and updates to employers and Ambassadors to support the continued promotion of careers in care via emails, update meetings/workshops with employers and updates on the NISCC website.
- Monitoring the progress of Ambassador Service activity to ensure consistent and quality provision of Ambassadors services via annual reports/evaluations on activity from employers and Ambassadors.

## **1.5. What is an Ambassador for Careers in Care and what is required of Ambassadors?**

Ambassadors go into settings where there are students or job seekers requesting advice and guidance about careers and help to motivate and inspire people to consider care as a positive career choice. These settings can include; schools and colleges, job centres, careers and recruitment event/fairs.

To become an Ambassador, individuals must have/agree;

- Direct experience of working in the sector and be willing to share their own life and career journeys with those considering a career in the care sector.
- A willingness to share real experiences of their day to day delivery of care and support. This is to allow them to bring the sector to life - creating awareness of the many varied, challenging and rewarding opportunities that are available.
- The ability to communicate enthusiastically and positively about their own job roles.
- To abide by a set of Principles and Policies and ensure they conduct their activities in a manner consistent with these Principles and Policies. (See Page 14).
- Complete Ambassador training prior to undertaking any Ambassador activity. (See Page 9).

### **Ambassadors for Careers in Care Associates:**

Ambassadors for Careers in Care are the primary source of information for people making career decisions but Ambassadors may wish to work with others who can complement their activity. Employers and Ambassadors for Careers in Care could adopt a collaborative approach with others to enhance their work, for example:

- A person who receives care and support – could talk from experience about having the right person supporting them, what makes a good care worker, and real examples of how care workers can make a positive difference to the lives of that individual.
- A young person who is still training or very new in their role – could speak from experience about the first 6 months as an apprentice or trainee. This could be of particular value when delivering Ambassadors for Careers in Care activity in schools.
- A training provider or workforce development specialist - could talk from experience about the different learning and development options that people can undertake in social care and early years from induction to apprenticeships to Higher Education as appropriate.

- An individual who has retired or moved on to another sector – could share how working in the sector enriched their lives or how they have used what they learned in care to apply in a new role or interest.
- People who work in support roles can be called **Ambassador Associates**.

Social care and early years' employers, service Coordinators and Ambassadors must ensure that:

- Ambassadors provide the lead role in promoting careers in social care and early years.
- Ambassador Associates engage with audiences in a **supporting role only**.
- Ambassador Associates are prepared for and understand how their role contributes to the NI Ambassador Service.
- Any information provided is current, and presented in a positive, impartial and unbiased way.
- The employer holds a local, up to date list of Ambassador Associates who it has **approved** to support the Ambassador in their delivery.

## 1.6. Delivering Ambassador Activity – What does this involve?

Ambassador activities may include; giving a presentation to students or job seekers, talking to a small group of young people in a school, leading an interactive game or activity, facilitating a discussion around a scenario or speaking to groups of teachers and careers advisors to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the care sector. The full list of Ambassador activities that Ambassadors are asked to select from at registration are as follows;

- formal presentations
- informal talks or discussions
- interactive group activities
- information stands
- supporting placement opportunities
- guided workplace visit
- publicity/media
- other specialist services that meet the aims of the Ambassadors for Careers in Care model

Employers could start by offering a small range of activity which may increase as Ambassador confidence and skills grow. Employers may already have established links with local schools or colleges and be already providing this type of activity which they could develop further. Whatever the level and type of service being offered – employers/organisations should commit to a **minimum of one event/talk per year**.

## Who are the target audiences for ambassador services?

Ambassador services may be delivered to some or all of the following audiences:



Students from Glengormley High School listening and interacting with NI Ambassadors; Jackie McCaughey, Area Manager, Mindwise; Simon Maltman, Deputy Manager, Positive Futures; Sarah-Jane McNeill, Hutchinson Care Homes, Care Assistant and Lynsey McAteer, Extra Care, Family Carer Trainer.

## 1.7. Ambassador Support - Welcome Module and Resource Bank:

### Welcome Module:

Before people begin the practical work of an Ambassador, it is important that all Ambassadors understand their role, the support they can expect and the resources available to them.

The NISCC in partnership with the Skills for Care and Development partners have produced a mobile app – the “**Welcome App**” to provide Ambassadors with an understanding of the role and the support available to them. The mobile app comprises 8 modules which include videos and learning activities as well as information. Ambassadors can complete the modules at their own pace but they must complete them **all** before undertaking Ambassador activity and their training must be signed off by their Ambassador Co-ordinator. When the Ambassador has successfully completed the Welcome App modules, the Co-ordinator will issue them with a certificate. (See page 20).

The Welcome App refers to some documents that Ambassadors need to help plan the development of their skills and knowledge as an Ambassador. These are as follows;

- Ambassador Activity Planner
- Ambassador Skills Checklist

Both of these documents can be downloaded from the **Ambassador Resource Bank** or **their Co-ordinator will provide these.**

### Ambassador Resource Bank:

The Resource Bank is a collection of resources that have been produced by Skills for Care and Development partners and are free to all registered Ambassadors from the NISCC website at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info) to support;

- Employers and employer partnerships to set up and manage their Ambassador Services.
- Ambassadors to develop their own skills and practice in their Ambassador role.
- Ambassadors when planning and delivering Ambassador activity.

These include the following;

- Top Tips for communication, for presenting information or working with people in different audiences.
- Ice breaker activities designed specifically for different age ranges/audiences or to help them understand the care sector.

- Evaluation or feedback forms to support Ambassadors and employers monitor activity and obtain feedback on their service.
- Ambassador promotional posters/leaflets/booklets that can be used to promote working in the sector or encouraging staff to become Ambassadors.

### How to access resources:

All employers will be provided with an Ambassador pack when they register to join the service. This will include a copy of the Guidance on setting up an Ambassador Service and guidance on how to access the mobile app and the resource bank from the NISCC website.



Jackie McCaughey, Area Manager, Mindwise; Simon Maltman, Deputy Manager, Positive Futures; Sarah-Jane McNeill, Hutchinson Care Homes, Care Assistant and Lynsey McAteer, Extra Care, Family Carer Trainer speaking to students at Glengormley High School



Simon Maltman, Deputy Manager; Positive Futures.



Martin Fallon, Course Director, NRC; Brenda Horgan, Professional SW Advisor, NISCC, Julie Beacon, Home Manager, Four Seasons and Cathy Kennedy, RWCW Project Administrator, NISCC.



Anita Scullion, Service Manager, Leonard Cheshire Disability speaking at RWCW launch event in SRC, Portadown on 18 March 2014

# **Appendix A: Principles and Policy**

# The Principles and Policy for NI Ambassador Service

## **Eligibility:**

To be eligible to join the NI Ambassador Service, you will

- Be a social care or early years employer providing direct care and support to adults, younger people, families and children or older people as a primary function of your business or;
- Be a formally constituted partnership of social care or early years' employers, each of whom provides direct care and support to adults, younger people, families and children or older people as a primary function of their business.

## **Expectations:**

In registering to join the NI Ambassador Service, you agree to:

- Lead and manage your Ambassadors for Careers in Care (NI) Service, defining how the service will work i.e. agreeing the type of service and level of commitment.
- Complete an employer registration form nominating a service Co-ordinator.
- Ensure that all those who register with the service are eligible to be Ambassadors for Careers in Care.
- Ensure that all ambassadors understand and abide by the Principles and Policies for Ambassadors for Careers in Care.
- Ensure Ambassadors complete the Welcome App Modules before undertaking any activity and help to maintain their knowledge via the Resources bank.
- Ensure that all registration details are kept up to date and that the service responds to customer queries efficiently and professionally.
- Ensure Ambassadors promote social care and early years using impartial, non-biased information.
- Conduct your Ambassadors Service in a way that reinforces the positive reputation of the Care Ambassadors model being delivered throughout the UK.
- Keep a record of Ambassador activity to assist with the monitoring of the NI Ambassador Service. The NISCC may require an annual update as part of their annual review of activity and sustainability of the service.

# The Principles and Policy for Co-ordinators of Ambassadors for Careers in Care services

## **Eligibility:**

As a NI Ambassador Service Co-ordinator you will:

- Be nominated by your employer or partnership of employers to co-ordinate your Ambassador Service on their behalf.

## **Expectations:**

As a NI Ambassador Service Co-ordinator you will:

- Ensure that the employer(s) is/are at the heart of decision making for the service, including, reviewing and agreeing plans/agreements and selecting Ambassadors for Careers in Care.
- Help the employer(s) and their Ambassadors to understand the Principles and Policy for the service and ensure that only eligible Ambassadors for Careers in Care are registered and trained as Ambassadors.
- Support employers to select appropriate people to deliver services that meet the needs of customers.
- Support employers in nominating/developing people who receive care and support who want to share their knowledge.
- Ensure that the employer(s) is/are notified when customers or others raise concerns or Ambassadors fail to abide by the Principles and Policy of the service.
- Be the main contact person for your Ambassador Service, providing your contact name, an email address and a telephone number as part of your employer registration to join the NI Ambassador Service.
- Receive 'customer' requests and requirements and organise activity as agreed by the employer or partnership of employers providing fair opportunity for Ambassadors.
- Ensure queries are responded to efficiently and information is communicated effectively.
- Maintain accurate and up to date Ambassador Service registration details and inform the NISCC of any fundamental changes including; changing the name of the service or if your service changes to form a partnership
- Monitor the progress of Ambassadors for Careers in Care through the Welcome Modules, communicating with employers and learners as appropriate.
- Gather and forward data and information to the NISCC on behalf of employer(s) and Ambassadors, as required and appropriate.

# The Principles and Policy for Ambassadors for Careers in Care

## **Eligibility:**

As an Ambassador you will:

- Work in a social care or early years role which involves direct day to day delivery of care and support, or be in a care support or ancillary role which involves some direct day to day delivery of care and support to people who use the care service, and;
- Work for and be supported by, a social care or early years employer which has either registered an Ambassador Service with the NISCC, or signed up to an Ambassador partnership.

## **Expectations:**

As an Ambassador you will:

- Have passion, enthusiasm and a desire to tell your story about supporting others.
- Have a good understanding of the social care or the early years sector and the ability to engage effectively with a range of people.
- Raise the profile and status of social care or early years, communicating effectively and promoting a positive image of the care sector.
- Provide a first-hand, current picture of what it is like to work in social care or early years and bring the working environment to life.
- Agree to complete Ambassador Welcome Modules before you start your role as an Ambassador and to continue to develop your knowledge and skills as may be outlined by your employer.
- Advise your service Co-ordinator of any changes to your registration details.
- Agree to abide by the Ambassadors for Careers in Care conduct expectations (below).
- Commit to giving some of your time to the Ambassador Service. (The amount of time and activity involved can vary depending on your employer commitment, please check your expected commitment with your employer.)
- Ensure materials held in the Resources Bank are not altered and are used appropriately.
- Ensure that those making career choices have access to information about a wide range of job roles across the care sector and are presented with impartial, non-biased information.

## Conduct:

As an Ambassador, you will commit to:

- Treating the service offered as a professional assignment.
- Behaving in a manner that represents your organisation and the sector in the best possible light.
- Being tolerant and treating people with dignity and respect.
- Being punctual and giving adequate notice if unable to attend any agreed activities. (The period of adequate notice should be agreed between parties delivering and receiving the service at the outset.)
- Refraining from any conduct or wrong-doing which may bring the profession into disrepute, or behaving in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to be an Ambassador or to act as a role model.
- Adhering to the NISCC Codes of Practise if you are registered/or required to be registered with the NISCC and informing the NISCC and your employer if you have breached your Codes of Practice.
- Adhering to your employer's code of conduct.
- Using appropriate and acceptable verbal and non-verbal language.
- Respecting the rights, religious or similar beliefs and cultural differences of individuals and uphold equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices.
- Providing information in a non-biased way and promoting relevant resources as appropriate.

**The diagram below shows key Ambassador Qualities:**



## **Appendix B: Registration Forms**



# Ambassadors for Careers in Care Employer Registration Form

## Employer Details:

Name of Organisation:	
Name of Manager:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Name of Ambassador Co-ordinator (Employer Co-ordinator):	
Name of Ambassador(s):	

I confirm that (Name of Organisation): \_\_\_\_\_

is a member of the NI Ambassador Service and hereby agrees to provide Ambassador/s to promote careers in care and raise the profile of working in care.

We agree to nominate a staff member to act as the main Co-ordinator for our Ambassador Service who will ensure that our Ambassador/s have been registered and have undertaken Ambassador training prior to undertaking Ambassador activity.

We agree to read and sign up to the Ambassador Principles and Policies and to ensure that our Ambassadors abide by this set of principles as they deliver Ambassador activity within Northern Ireland. We agree it is the responsibility of the employing organisation to quality assure their Ambassadors and manage complaints if these arise.

We agree to inform the NISCC if we no longer wish to remain a part of this service.

Principles and Policy (tick that you have read and understood this set of principles):	
Signature of Manager:	
Date:	



# Ambassador Registration Form

<b>(1) First name:</b>	
<b>(2) Surname:</b>	
<b>(3) Age range: 16-24 / 25-49 / 50+</b>	
<b>(4) Organisation / employment name:</b>	
<b>(5) E-mail address:</b>	
<b>(6) Job title:</b>	

**(7) Please select area where you would be willing to travel (tick all that apply)**

- Antrim
- Armagh
- Down
- Fermanagh
- Derry / Londonderry
- Tyrone

**(8) Career route / background into the sector (tick all that apply)**

- Apprenticeship
- Career Change
- Entered the sector when left school / college
- Graduate
- Job Centre Plus, work programme or other employment support initiative
- Returned to work following career break / period of unemployment
- Other (please specify):

**(9) Experience – who do you have experience working with (tick all that apply)?**

- Children and young people
- Older people
- People with autistic spectrum conditions
- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health needs
- People with physical disability
- People with sensory impairment
- Other (please specify):

**(10) Audience – what type of audience would you like to work with (tick all that apply)?**

- Career advisors [ ]
- Colleges / training providers [ ]
- Community groups [ ]
- Employment advisors [ ]
- Schools [ ]
- Teachers / Educators [ ]
- Unemployed [ ]
- Universities [ ]
- Other (please specify): [ ]

**(11) Services – what services would you be able to provide (tick all that apply)?**

- Formal presentation [ ]
- Informal talk or discussion [ ]
- Interactive group activity [ ]
- Information stand [ ]
- Guided workplace visit [ ]
- Media / publicity e.g. promotional materials like DVD [ ]
- Mentoring new people to the sector [ ]
- Supporting a workplace opportunity [ ]
- Other (please specify): [ ]

I have read the Ambassadors for Careers in Care Principles and Policy and agree to abide by these principles. (Please tick below)

I confirm that this Ambassador is employed in the social care or early years sector. (Circle Social Care or Early Years and tick accordingly).

Ambassadors for Careers in Care Principles and Policy:	
Employed in Social Care/Early Years:	
Signature of Ambassador:	
Name of Employer Co-ordinator:	
Signature of Employer Co-ordinator:	
Date:	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Please return completed forms to [cathy.kennedy@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:cathy.kennedy@niscc.hscni.net)



**This is to certify that**

.....

**is a registered**

***Ambassador  
for Careers in Care  
Northern Ireland***

**Registration authorised by the Employer/Employer Partnership:**

Employer/Employer Partnership Name:

.....

Signed:.....

Date: .....



Top : Maggie Grant, Deputy Director for Curriculum, SRC; Anita Scullion, Services Manager, Leonard Cheshire Disability; Grainne Magee, Lecturer, SRC; Colum Conway, CE, NISCC; Uel McIlveen, NISCC Participation Group; Patricia Higgins, NISCC and Carolyn Davison, Acting Assistant Curriculum Director, SRC.

Bottom: NI Ambassadors - Feargal Mellon, Project Worker, NIAMH; Frank Stewart (Service User); Amber Hassan, Supervisor, Aishling Day Care; Simon Maltman, Deputy Manager, Positive Futures and Roger Henry, Support Worker, Triangle Housing.