

Transforming recruitment in a leading care home group



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Implementing Plainly has completely revolutionised our recruiting.

Rebecca Dobson

Director of People and Talent, Orchard Care Homes

HIGHLIGHTS



Time to hire reduced from several weeks to as little as seven days



Contracts signed and returned in minutes versus days to return by post



Offer packs now ready in seconds rather than taking over an hour of admin time to prepare

continued on next page >>



Single view of all candidates in the recruitment process **provides instant oversight** for HR and recruitment teams



Care homes can see all candidates **CVs in one place and review at the click of a button**



End user feedback overwhelmingly positive with 100% adoption



Reports and detailed management information **available immediately**

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Having used Plainly for the last four months as a home manager it makes the recruitment process quicker and easier to monitor. To have everything in one place and a system that pretty much does the majority of the recruitment process for you is a huge benefit.

Lucy Gradwell

Quality Monitoring Officer, Orchard Care Homes

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Orchard Care Homes are a leading provider of elderly residential and nursing care homes in the North of England, operating 24 homes across the region and employing over 1100 staff. They engaged Plainly as part of a strategic review of their approach to recruitment.

Like many care home groups, Orchard has ongoing recruitment requirements as vacancies occur across the care homes in their group. They recognised that due to extensive compliance requirements, time to hire for unfilled roles was lengthy, leading to additional costs as agency staff backfilled roles. Many parts of the process, such as essential checks and candidate shortlisting, were manual. This required a back and forth via email that meant care home teams were spending considerable time on recruitment-related admin and paperwork was difficult to track.

Essential documentation was held locally making version control and maintaining a consistent approach across the group challenging. As a consequence the HR team lacked oversight of the whole process and reporting, auditing and maintaining standards was time consuming.

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Compliance checks are essential with recruitment in the care sector and our manual processes meant we were spending considerable time ensuring every necessary step in hiring someone had been completed. This resulted in delays for great candidates and unnecessary expenditure on agency staff while we waited to fill roles.

Rebecca Dobson

Director of People and Talent, Orchard Care Homes

OBJECTIVES

Orchard engaged Plainly as part of a strategic review of their approach to recruitment, looking to:

- Speed up the recruitment process to identify, engage with and hire the best candidates quickly
- Save costs by reducing reliance on agency staff to fill gaps created by an extended time to hire
- Maximise consistency of approach across all the individual care homes
- Improve central oversight of time, costs and processes and improve management information

CONSIDERATIONS

Orchard appreciated that at least some of the solution would be in the form of a tech platform but as part of the review, they were firm in the belief that end user experience was critical to any solution they looked at, stating:

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The care industry is littered with tech platforms that don't address the day to day needs of their end users or are cumbersome and time consuming to implement. We approached this project knowing what we wanted for the end users in our care homes and admin teams and very clear that their needs had to be at the forefront of any decision making.

James Lyner

Process Improvement Manager, Orchard Care Homes

Central to the discussion was that any third party solution had to demonstrate:

- **Ease of use by non technical experts.** Recruitment touches many people who all input to the decision and any solution had to be accessible to all end users, many of whom do not come from a technical background. Therefore, any platform had to be intuitive, easy to get started on and show clear value for users such as care home managers and admin teams.
- **Central oversight, local use.** The model of local care homes managing most of their own recruiting is one Orchard believed in and didn't wish to change. Local managers know their market best and could be most agile in responding to specific recruitment needs. However, any platform had to considerably improve oversight at a central level to ensure consistency of standards, processes and compliance could be maintained and reported on without the current need for on site manual auditing.
- **Detailed understanding of recruitment processes within the care sector.** The ability to design processes and adapt the platform to suit a very specific set of requirements that addressed the three priority areas of time, cost and compliance was critical. As well as tackling macro objectives such as reducing the overall cost of recruitment, Orchard were looking for a solution that could help with very specific matters, such as the record keeping requirements of the CQC.

HOW PLAINLY ADDRESSED ORCHARD'S REQUIREMENTS

Plainly's core proposition is to help businesses by automating manual tasks to avoid skilled teams being tied up with repetitive or time consuming work. It was very clear that Orchard's recruitment processes relied upon manual steps at every stage, which was increasing the admin burden within both the HR department and individual care homes.

Breaking the project down into three stages that addressed the core requirements we looked at:

1

Understanding the end to end process

We began by mapping the manual process for recruitment from start to finish. This allowed all Orchard stakeholders to articulate clearly where bottlenecks occurred, where mistakes could creep in and where processes could be streamlined; allowing us to understand fully the entire process and all the component elements and considerations.

2

Collaborating on bespoke solutions

In conjunction with the Orchard team, we developed bespoke automated work flows within the Plainly platform based on our proprietary templates, that met Orchard's exact requirements and took advantage of the streamlined process.

3

Staged implementation and roll out

Automation of processes and the roll out of any new system can be disruptive and cause concern, even if the end benefits are clear to see. Added to this, we rolled out the Plainly platform at Orchard during the COVID pandemic when teams were under immense pressure. This highlighted the need for launching cautiously to maximise local ownership of the new processes and minimise end user anxiety.

We led a staged roll out across a limited number of care homes to ensure that any teething problems were picked up and fixed and that we had advocates within the business when the full roll out took place. This approach allowed us to work very closely with the teams in the central support centre and the individual care homes to iterate in almost real time, creating highly bespoke solutions that were based on live user feedback.



SOLUTIONS AND RESULTS

The brief was answered by addressing four key areas (process, documentation, contract signing and document management) to fit Orchard's requirements around:



Saving time



Saving cost



Increasing consistency and oversight



Ease of use by non-technical experts



The interplay between central visibility and local usability



PROCESS



Challenges

- Time consuming manual processes
- Duplication of work and effort to ensure 100% accuracy
- Lack of central visibility over local recruitment
- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Delays for candidates and in filling vacancies



Solution

Bespoke multi-step automated workflow designed to mirror the recruitment process



Outcomes

- Clarity about where every candidate is in the process and who internally needed to action things next
- Ensures mandatory steps can't be missed, eg. DBS checks have to be completed before a candidate can move to the next step in the workflow
- Keeps the process moving with prompts and alerts and clear next steps at every stage
- Instantly gives a centralised view of all local recruitment

Example of Orchard workflow page

1. Application Form

Has Jeremy already completed an Application Form?
Answer: Yes

✓ Done

APPLICATION

2. Upload application form

Application form for Jeremy Blond / Recruitment document (ancillary)
[View](#) / [Edit](#) / [More...](#)

✓ Done



DOCUMENTATION



Challenges

- No standardisation of documents used across the group
- No central view of the documents sent from individual care homes
- Delays waiting for hard copies of contracts to be returned
- No central repository of all documentation



Solution

All necessary documents created and stored on the Plainly platform



Outcomes

- All standard contracts and documentation in one place
- Version control of all documents
- CVs uploaded via direct feed to allow easy shortlisting
- Key documentation able to be sent via email to candidates with a record of it happening
- Instant visibility into all recruitment documentation

Example of Orchard documentation page

ORCHARD
Care Homes

Contract of Employment

This statement details the main terms and conditions of your employment with Newco PLC, trading as Orchard Care Homes, The Hamlet, Hornbeam Business Park, Harrogate, HG2 8RE (the Company) which the Company is required to furnish you with in compliance with the Employment Rights Act 1996. This forms a relevant agreement under the Working Time Regulations 1998 and supersedes any previous such statements of contract written or verbal.

KEY TERMS

Employee's Name:	Jane Doe
Name of Employer:	Newco PLC
Start of Contract:	To be confirmed in writing after you complete all required checks
Continuous Service Date:	To be confirmed in writing after you complete all required checks
Place of Work:	Test Care Home
Job Title:	Care Assistant - Level 3



CONTRACT SIGNING



Challenges

- Delays waiting for signed contracts
- No central record of signed documents



Solution

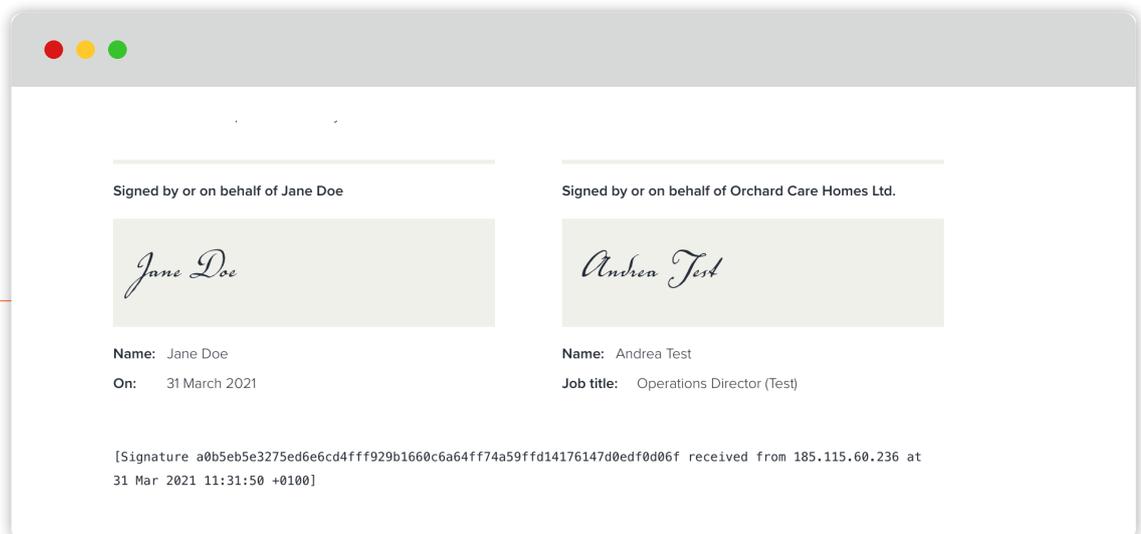
Secure e-signature functionality within the Plainly platform



Outcomes

- Contracts signed in seconds rather than delayed by post
- Permanent records of signatures securely held in a central location

Example of Orchard e-signature



DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING



Challenges

- Time consuming to produce reports based on manual records
- No instantly available central repository of key documentation



Solution

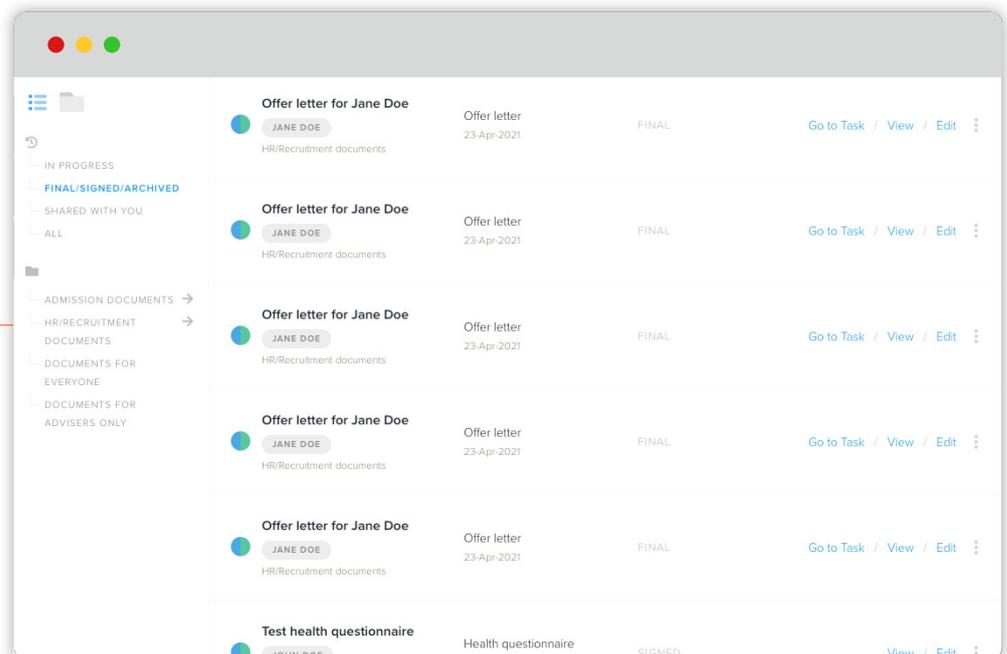
Secure document management built into the Plainly platform



Outcomes

- Instant reporting and analytics to allow future recruitment decisions to be evidence based
- Single source for documents, all instantly accessible
- Central view of all local activity
- Secure storage of all key documents

Example of Orchard document management



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The results so far have far exceeded my expectations because they have addressed all the areas that I wanted covered - time, cost and compliance.

Streamlining the process with automated workflows and documentation has significantly reduced time to hire, meaning candidates are now ready to start with us in as little as seven days. This is having a really **positive impact** on candidates and their experience of starting work with us.

Rebecca Dobson

Director of People and Talent, Orchard Care Homes

I have been working with Plainly this week and just to feedback - I absolutely 'love' the system - it is so much easier and user friendly. Really impressed.

Caroline Whelpton

Care home manager, Orchard Care Homes



CONCLUSION

By working closely with the Orchard team to meet each of their strategic objectives we have been able to create a scalable solution that offers tangible benefits to the HR team, individual care homes and candidates applying for roles.



Strategic

Orchard was looking to make wholesale changes to their entire approach to recruitment. Using the Plainly platform enabled them to address all their objectives around time, compliance and cost with a single supplier who could provide end to end support to drive the systematic changes they were looking for.



Tangible

By creating a detailed workflow of the entire recruitment process and finding solutions for all the individual pain points we have been able to make incremental improvements at every stage to enhance the experience of recruitment across the board.

Savings in time and cost are quantifiable and are already having very real benefits across the Orchard Group.



Scalable

Automating previously manual processes and documentation means Orchard now has the ability to grow without incurring an increased admin cost or burden; or losing oversight and risking compliance issues.

The project has been so successful for recruitment that Plainly has now also been implemented to support the admissions process across the Orchard Group.

ABOUT PLAINLY

Plainly frees businesses from administrative overload - securely and quickly through a no-fuss, easy to implement, easy to use platform. Designed for non-expert users, the platform eliminates the delays caused by paperwork bottlenecks and the inherent risks and inefficiency of manual processes. Talk to us about how Plainly can help you.

CONTACT PLAINLY



Let's talk



Get a demo



[plainly.com](https://www.plainly.com)



LinkedIn

