

NHS
Bristol
NHS Foundation Trust
Bristol | Weston

Big vision, bold change and breakthrough wins across Bristol's hospitals

The journey from manual administration to connected recruitment and onboarding automation

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Our challenge

Two trusts, one workforce to hire, and a duplicated manual process

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Workforce



28,000

staff across two Trusts prior to merger

Annual hiring

8,000

new starters recruited every year

Annual applications

135,000

applications processed every year

- Two separate organisations
- Separate systems
- Different processes
- Two consultations
- Different KPIs
- High volumes
- Paper reliant checks
- Different locations

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Our solution

A robust three-year plan

One service first, then automation, then scale.

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YEAR ONE

One service

- Two teams, one service
- Standardised processes
- Better candidate and manager experience

YEAR TWO

Automate

- 8 processes automated
- Advert linking to payroll handover

We are here

YEAR THREE

Scale

- Remaining processes
- Faster time to hire
- Continuous improvement

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How we reached the solution

Designed by staff for staff

28 Improvement hour sessions

3 Away days brought teams together

8 Automations validated in hyper care

4 Department Subject Matter Experts led the design

3 Manager focus groups



Staff Survey scores improved . . .

41% to 75%

Feel involved in the changes to the service

79% to 96%

Feel informed about becoming a single service

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Year One

At a glance

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Online ID checks
2 days
Previously two weeks

Online interviews
100%
Automated set-up

Contracts
1 day
Reduced from one week

TRAC Starter Forms
2 days
Reduced from one week

Time to hire

Medical and Dental
48 → 24 days
↓ 49%

Agenda for Change
18 → 13 days
↓ 21%

Satisfaction rate

91%

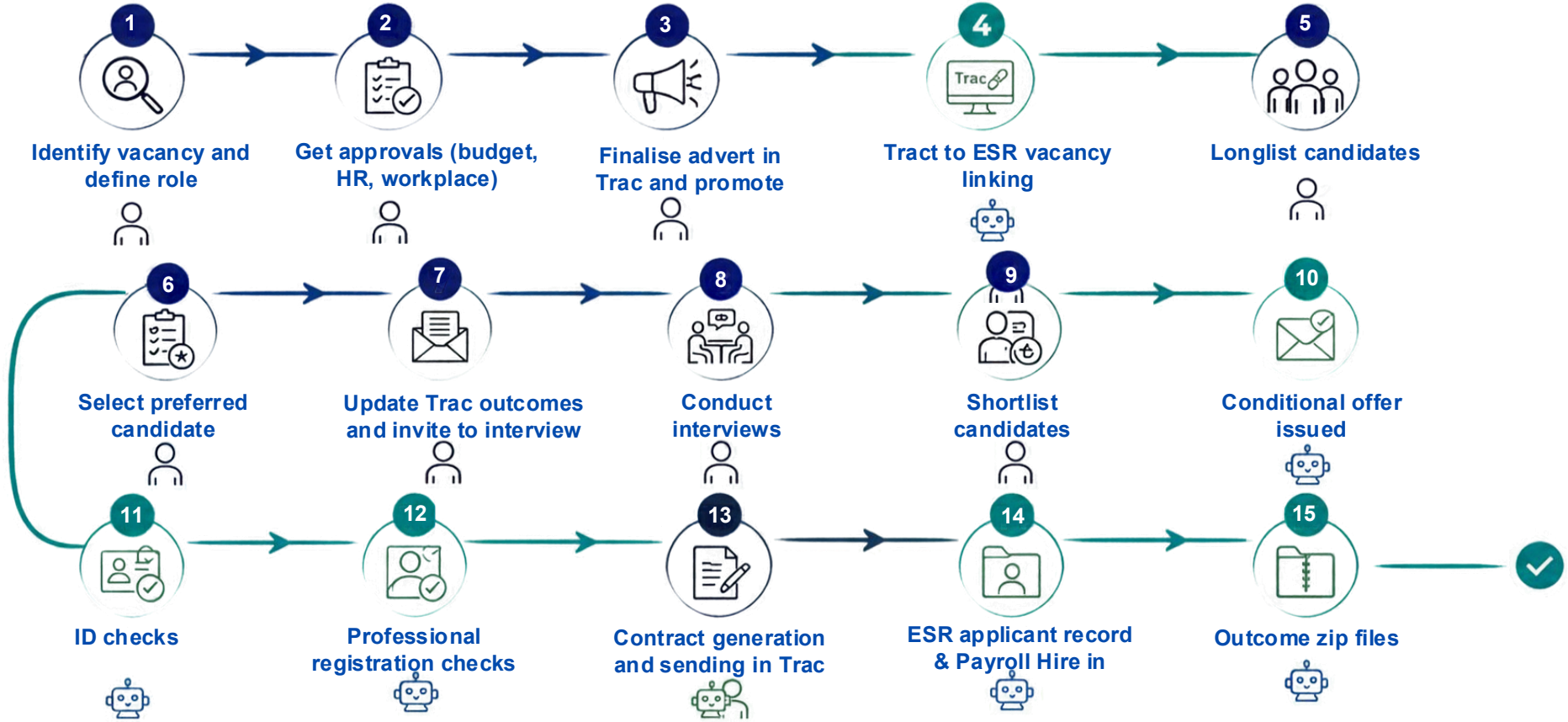


A more accessible, inclusive process for every candidate - online, paperless and easier to adjust to individual needs.

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End-to-end

The recruitment journey



Key

- Bot
- Person
- In tandem

8 Automated (inc. reappoints)

8 stay with people, by design

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Year 2:
Automation

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PAY COST EFFICIENCIES

£190K

Year on year payback

AHEAD OF TARGET

+1.4 FTE

Based on original projections

ANNUAL HOURS SAVED

10,000

Projected hours saved

ANNUALISED FTE RELEASED

5.6

Band 3 Coordinators

Automation has not only improved efficiency but has also enhanced the human aspect of recruitment, giving our recruitment coordinators more time to focus on meaningful engagement with candidates and workforce planning.

Shivani Choksi, Supervisor

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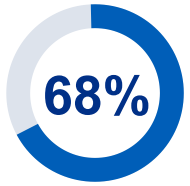
Automation

The team is behind it

73% support further automation

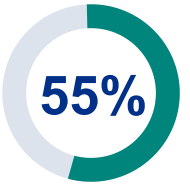


16 in favour · 5 unsure · 1 opposed



Say automation improved their job

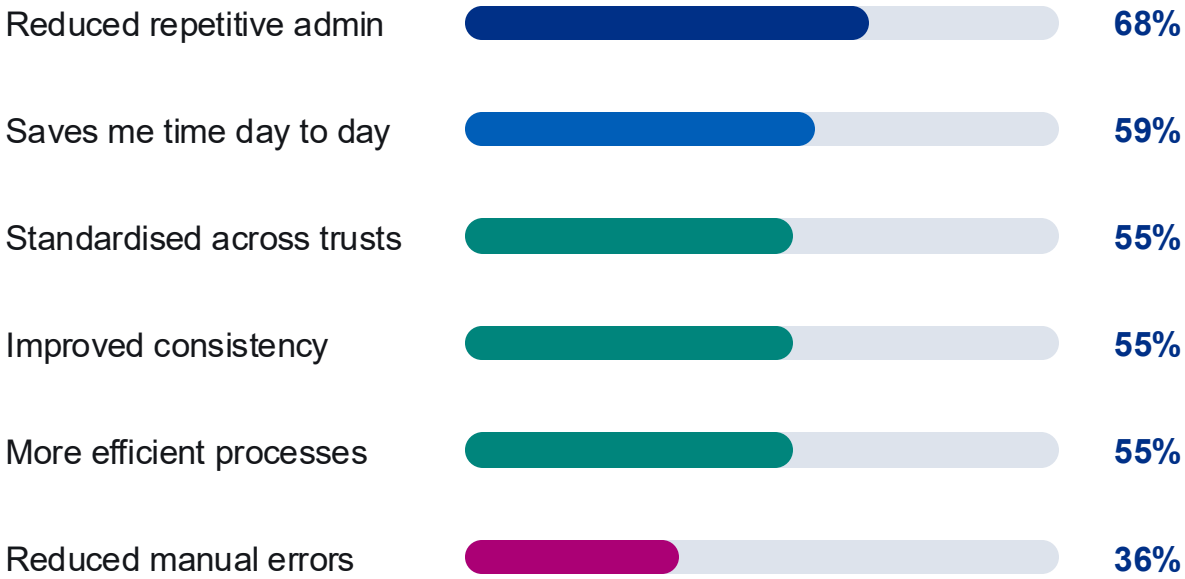
15 of 22



Get back an hour or more a week

12 of 22

WHERE AUTOMATION IS ALREADY WORKING



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What's next

Smarter Recruitment

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Coordinators as advisors

WE WILL MEASURE

Hours back to candidates

Managers focused on selection

WE WILL MEASURE

Hiring manager satisfaction

Smarter, data-led planning

WE WILL MEASURE

Time to hire against target

Scale beyond Bristol

WE WILL MEASURE

Time saved and consistency



For patients: posts filled sooner, fewer vacancy gaps and less reliance on agency staff.

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From ambition to live automation

The highs, the challenges and foundations for success

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~6000 ESR vacancies created and linked to Trac

~2700 conditional offer letters issued

~900 ID verification checks

>2500 candidate files archived

99% average success rate

>10000 hours saved

What helped us move forward

- **Standardisation** before automation: both trusts committed to aligning processes, creating a stronger foundation for delivery.
- Support **across the organisation**: recruitment, ESR, IT and wider teams helped turn agreed designs into working solutions.
- **Phased delivery and feedback** — learning from live processing informed improvements.

What challenged us

- Production reliability: **historic** issues disrupted processing and required joint troubleshooting, recovery and validation.
- **Change fatigue** and competing priorities — limited capacity for testing and adoption alongside service transformation.
- **Complex system dependencies** — coordinating Trac, ESR and payroll timing.
- **Data quality and process variations** — missing information and exceptions required refinement.

What makes automation succeed?

- **Standardise first:** agree the process first.
- Keep **operational teams involved.**
- Engage **wider teams early.**
- **Make change manageable**: phase delivery, communicate clearly and allow time for adoption.
- **Plan for live service:** establish monitoring, exception ownership and clear routes for support.
- **Measure and improve:** review performance together and use the findings to refine the service.

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Thank you, any questions?

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