

# Adopting the Care Workforce Pathway

The how-to guide



# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Care Workforce Pathway adoption</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Planning</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.1 Making a plan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.2 Governance</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.2.1 Get buy-in</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.2.2 Build a Pathway adoption team</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.2.3 Agree clear decision making early</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.3 Engagement and awareness</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.4 Data – measuring impact</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. Roles</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.1 Role mapping and the Care Workforce Pathway</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.1.1 Making role mapping manageable</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5. Recruitment</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5.1 Adverts and interviews</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5.2 Job descriptions</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5.3 Induction and onboarding</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6. Training and development</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>6.1 Supervisions and appraisals</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>6.2 Career conversations</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>6.3 Learning and development</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>7. Pathway advocacy</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>7.1 Role modelling and the Care Workforce Pathway</b>	<b>30</b>

# 1. Introduction

This guide is for care providers ready to adopt the Care Workforce Pathway (the Pathway). It breaks the process into manageable steps and offers practical tools and resources to support your organisation's journey.

If you would like to learn more before adopting the Pathway:

- **Read:** [Understanding the Care Workforce Pathway – A guide for all](#)
- **Visit:** the [Skills for Care website](#) for case studies and more

This guide provides clear information and suggested resources to help organisations adopt the Pathway. The Pathway is designed to be flexible, so you can tailor it to your organisation's size, priorities, and challenges.

## Resources

This guide talks about resources that are available to help individuals and organisations understand and adopt the Pathway.

The real-life insights of those who have adopted and are using the Pathway in their organisations have helped shape the resources.

## Tools

There are also tools available to support your organisation's adoption journey. They're not there to tell you exactly what to do, you can use them as they are or adapt them to fit your organisation's needs and culture.

To access the latest resources and tools visit the [Skills for Care website](#).

## 2. Care Workforce Pathway adoption

Pathway adoption means care providers decide to use the Pathway's recommended practices and tools in their everyday work.

Benefits of adopting the Pathway include:

- helping to plan jobs and training better
- making it easier to find and keep staff
- giving staff clear steps to grow in their career
- showing care work is a skilled job
- helping to bring more people into care jobs
- making care better for everyone.

### Making Pathway adoption easier

Introducing the Pathway is a great opportunity to improve and grow as an organisation. The Pathway makes this simple by breaking adoption into:

- **five areas** – planning, roles, recruitment, training and development, Pathway advocacy
- **three levels** – light, medium, full.

This approach helps organisations:

- plan and track the progress step by step
- focus on what matters most for their size and needs
- move at a pace that fits their capacity.

Resource	Description	Access
<b>Care Workforce Pathway adoption levels explained</b>	This document describes how an organisation can adopt the Pathway at the three different levels and breaks that down into the five areas.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-adoption-levels-explained.pdf">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-adoption-levels-explained.pdf</a>

## The Care Workforce Pathway areas

The five Pathway areas are listed below. This guide looks at each area in turn and talks about what each level looks like and the resources and tools available to support adoption.

<b>Planning</b>	Supporting organisations to stay on track, avoid problems, and show results that matter.
<b>Roles</b>	Making it easier to put the right people in the right roles, plan for the future, and keep teams working well.
<b>Recruitment</b>	Helping to reduce staff turnover, save money, and build a strong team from the start.
<b>Training and development</b>	Getting teams ready for the future by improving skills and building confidence.
<b>Pathway advocacy</b>	Helping build trust, attract good people, share good practice, and show the organisation as a leader in care.

## The Care Workforce Pathway levels

Each of the Pathway areas has three levels of adoption, shown below. Each level builds on the one before, so organisations can start small and continue over time. This flexible structure respects differences between providers, whether large or small, with different resources and priorities.

<b>Light adoption</b>	<b>Medium adoption</b>	<b>Full adoption</b>
This level is about helping staff learn about the Pathway and using Pathway ideas in daily work and conversations.	This level is about using the Pathway more often, making clear how the Pathway fits in with existing plans, and helping staff grow skills and confidence.	This level is about making the Pathway part of everything an organisation does, shaping a strong, skilled workforce and sharing good practice.

By using these levels and areas, adopting the Pathway becomes manageable, measurable, and motivating. It supports organisations to stay on track, celebrate progress, and show results that matter.

## 3. Planning

This section looks at four themes to think about linked to Pathway adoption and planning:

Area	Themes	This helps organisations to:
Planning	<b>3.1 Making a plan</b> Knowing what needs to be done and how to do it.	<b>Make a clear plan and check progress</b>  Supporting organisations to stay on track, avoid problems and show results that matter.
	<b>3.2 Governance</b> Having rules and checks to make sure everything is done properly and fairly.	
	<b>3.3 Engagement and awareness</b> Making sure people know what's happening and feel involved.	
	<b>3.4 Data – measuring impact</b> Collecting numbers and facts to see if something is working well.	

### Planning and the Care Workforce Pathway

Planning is an important first step. It helps you make the most of the Pathway, see how it supports your organisation's goals, and makes adoption smoother over time.

Planning helps you to:

- work out why you want to adopt the Pathway and what you want to achieve
- break the project into small, easy steps
- plan time, people and resources carefully
- test and improve things a little at a time
- manage expectations – this is a long journey, not a quick fix
- link adoption to your organisation's goals, like career growth and future roles.

#### Pathway adopter insights

“ One thing we wish we had done from the outset was have a structured plan so we could have clear goals, timelines and review how far we had come. ”

“ Don't rush it. It's a deep process, not a quick fix. ”

“ Testing the Care Workforce Pathway has enabled us to understand our key considerations and focus for the future. It has allowed us to map our values, roles, and competencies – helping us identify both strengths and areas for improvement. ”

## 3.1 Making a plan

How your organisation plans will depend on the time available, size of your organisation, and the level of adoption you're working towards.

### What is a plan?

- It's up to your organisation how you record the plan, but in simple terms a plan is:
  - a rough idea of what your organisation wants to do, when you might do it, and how it might start, even if it's already part of other work
  - a set of steps or actions to help you reach a goal.
- This may include verbal agreements, informal notes, or reflective conversations.
- Those working on the Pathway will want to record a plan of what they are aiming to achieve and when.

**“ The biggest driver for adoption (and our plan) was to cut down on wasted resources – putting staff teams through training that wasn't actually needed. The Pathway supports efforts to remove duplication and reduce costs. ”**

### Why is it important?

- Planning gives structure and direction to adoption.
- It helps manage time and resources well.
- It makes sure actions match organisational priorities.
- It makes progress easier to track and review.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is making a plan for what it wants to do with the Pathway. They are considering what needs to change or get better, why it matters, and how the Pathway can help.	The organisation or Pathway team are reviewing the plan to see what works and how other areas of the organisation might benefit.	There is no separate plan for using the Pathway because it is now part of the organisation's way of working and workforce planning.

Things your organisation might want to consider when planning:

- How much time do you have?
- How big is your organisation?
- What workforce problems do you want to fix?
- How will the Pathway help?
- How will you get buy-in from leaders?
- What level of adoption will you aim for?
- Who will make decisions?
- Where will you start (maybe a small pilot)?
- When will things happen?
- What actions will help adoption?
- What do you need (people, time, money, tools)?

### Your plan might include:

- the workforce challenges you want to change
- the expected benefits of the Pathway for your organisation
- how leaders will be informed and involved
- the level of adoption you are aiming for (light, medium, full)
- internal governance arrangements (rules and processes for the Pathway)
- where adoption will start (e.g., a pilot or small-scale test)
- a description of the work and key timings
- actions and activities to make adoption happen
- resources needed (time, people, equipment, funds, processes).

Tool	Description	Access
<b>Care Workforce Pathway basic planning template</b>	A basic tool to provide a starter for Pathway planning.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-basic-planning-template.xlsx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-basic-planning-template.xlsx</a>
<b>100-day challenge guidance and template</b>	A flexible planning template to help set and track goals over a chosen timeframe.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/100-day-challenge-guidance-and-template.docx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/100-day-challenge-guidance-and-template.docx</a>

## 3.2 Governance

Governance gives clear rules and checks to make sure everything is done properly and fairly. To support governance when adopting the Pathway, it is important to:

- get buy-in
- build a Pathway adoption team
- agree decision-making processes early.

Good governance results in:

- clear roles and responsibilities, keeping everyone on track toward the same goals
- consistency, so things are done the same way each time
- finding problems early, giving time to put plans in place to stop them
- improvement, checks and reviews to help things get better over time
- transparency with information and decisions shared openly, making change easier, fair, legal, and in line with organisational policies.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation has chosen to adopt the Pathway. They are thinking about who should be involved, how much time it might take, and how decisions will be made.	The organisation has a named person leading Pathway work. There may also be a Pathway team to help move things forward and learn about the difference it's making.	The Pathway is part of the organisation's business as usual. The named person (and team) makes sure any changes follow policies and procedures and all decisions and actions are clearly recorded.

## 3.2.1 Get buy-in

Getting buy-in means asking people to agree and support adopting the Pathway. It is the foundation for good governance. It makes sure:

- managers and staff are involved and take ownership
- leaders show support, proving the Pathway is important
- it fits with the organisation's culture, so it's easier and more meaningful to use.



Adopting the Pathway might bring changes that affect staff, finances, or other resources. So, before adopting at any level, approval, and support from senior leaders will be needed.

Buy-in isn't only about senior leaders though. Pathway adopters who have already implemented the Pathway have shown that involving staff at all levels from the start has many benefits ([see section 3.3 for more information](#)).

Tool	Description	Access
<b>Care Workforce Pathway sample report template for Board</b>	A sample document to help organisations learn about the Pathway, get interested, and make choices.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-sample-report-template-for-board.docx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-sample-report-template-for-board.docx</a>
<b>Care Workforce Pathway sample poster</b>	A poster designed to introduce teams to the Pathway.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-sample-poster.pdf">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-sample-poster.pdf</a>

## 3.2.2 Build a Pathway adoption team

Adopting the Pathway needs the right skills, knowledge, and resources. To support this, organisations can build an adoption team to lead and organise the work.

### Who to involve

It's important to choose the right people for the team. It may be helpful to think about past job titles and consider who has the time, skills, and understanding to do this best.

### Why have a team?

An adoption team can help by:

- planning and managing the process
- introducing the Pathway in an organised way
- making sure the Pathway fits with current policies and practices
- communicating and engaging with staff
- making sure knowledge is shared, so that if someone leaves, the work can continue.



**We wish we had documented our planning, activities, and learning and had shared this with a delivery team rather than one individual. It was only once they left that we realised the gravity of the loss to implementing the Pathway and slowed our progress.**



## 3.2.3 Agree clear decision making early

Agree who will make decisions about using the Pathway and what resources are needed.

Using the Pathway might change job roles and how staff are managed. It's important to agree how decisions will be made and that any changes will follow your organisation's rules and processes.

Your organisation might want to decide:

- If all decisions are the same and who makes them, e.g.,
  - big decisions (like budgets or policy changes): senior leaders
  - day-to-day decisions (like planning training): the Pathway team.
- How these decisions will be documented and communicated.

### 3.3 Engagement and awareness

Engagement and awareness is about helping staff understand the Pathway and how it links to their jobs and careers. It includes sharing information, talking about changes, and asking for feedback.

#### Why is it important?

- Staff need to know why the Pathway matters and how it helps them.
- Good communication builds trust and makes staff feel valued.
- Involving staff early helps encourage people to stay and supports recognition.
- Change is more likely to succeed when the whole organisation feels involved.



**Involve everyone. The best insights come from the people living the work every day. This enables total ownership.**



Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is learning about the Pathway. Not everyone knows about it, but awareness is growing.	Awareness of the Pathway is increasing. Clear messages help staff understand why it is helpful for them. Staff may have been asked for their views.	Everyone in the organisation knows about the Pathway and how it links to roles, recruitment, and training and development. Staff understand how the organisation uses the Pathway and why.

Things you might want to consider:

- How will you share information about the Pathway?
- How will you explain what changes are coming?
- How will you invite feedback and questions?
- How will you involve representative bodies early?

Tool	Description	Access
<b>Care Workforce Pathway sample poster</b>	A poster to introduce teams to the Pathway.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-sample-poster.pdf">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-sample-poster.pdf</a>
<b>Understanding the Care Workforce Pathway – A guide for all</b>	A guide for anyone wishing to find out more.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Understanding-the-Care-Workforce-Pathway-a-guide-for-all.pdf">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Understanding-the-Care-Workforce-Pathway-a-guide-for-all.pdf</a>

## 3.4 Data – measuring impact

### Why data matters

Data turns ideas into clear actions. It helps you see progress and impact, so you know if the Pathway is working. By looking at data, you can measure success against key goals like:

- better recruitment
- keeping staff longer
- helping careers grow.

Data shows what works well and what needs to change. It keeps the Pathway useful and effective. Tracking engagement, outcomes, and feedback also builds trust and proves value to others.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is starting to think about what information and data it needs to be able to check if/how the Pathway is making a difference.	The organisation has set a starting point with data and now collects information regularly to show how the Pathway is making a difference.	The organisation is using data to understand how the Pathway is making a difference. This information is used to plan things like recruitment, keeping staff, moving people to new jobs, and planning future roles.

To measure the impact of adopting the Pathway you may want to consider:

### Baselines

A baseline is your starting point. It shows where you are now, so you can see the difference later. This is important because:

- it gives clear evidence of change
- it shows funders, regulators, and your team the impact of the Pathway.

Start by checking what data you already have. If it's not right, collect new data. Use existing tools where possible, for example:

- staff surveys
- HR data (turnover, vacancies, training, promotions, exit interviews)
- quality checks
- CQC plans.

## What good looks like

To see a difference, you need to understand where you want to be. To support this, decide what a 'good' impact looks like, for example:

- more job applications
- staff staying longer
- happier staff.

## How you will measure progress

Agree on a starting point then check for change, for example:

- record how many job applications you get now
- check again later to see if this number goes up.

**“ Be courageous.  
Let your data  
challenge  
you and your  
assumptions.  
”**

Tool	Description	Access
<b>Positive culture toolkit</b>	The toolkit helps at different stages to build, keep, and improve a workplace culture that is fair, kind, and works well together.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Managing-a-service/Positive-workplace-culture/A-positive-culture-toolkit-for-adult-social-care.aspx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Managing-a-service/Positive-workplace-culture/A-positive-culture-toolkit-for-adult-social-care.aspx</a>
<b>Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS)</b>	ASC-WDS is a free online service for adult social care in England. It helps organisations keep track of staff, training, and funding.	<a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data-Set/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data-Set.aspx">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data-Set/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data-Set.aspx</a>

## 4. Roles

This section looks at the theme of role mapping and its link to Pathway adoption:

Area	Themes	This helps organisations to:
Roles	<b>Role category mapping</b> Sorting jobs into groups so it's clear what each role does.	<b>Understand the jobs they have</b>  Making it easier to put the right people in the right roles and keep teams working well.

### 4.1 Role mapping and the Care Workforce Pathway

The Pathway is a clear guide that explains what working in adult social care means. Using role categories and values, it shows the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours needed to give good, personalised care and support.

Role mapping means comparing the roles in your organisation with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours in the Pathway role categories.

An up-to-date list of the role categories available can be found on GOV.UK

Resource	Description	Access
Role categories	This website lists all the role categories.	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care">www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care</a>
Role categories: easy read	This website lists all the role categories.	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care-easy-read">www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-workforce-pathway-for-adult-social-care-easy-read</a>

### Benefits of role mapping

Role mapping is useful for any size of organisation and can help to:

- spot jobs that overlap or have gaps
- plan training, supervision, and career steps
- make recruitment easier by setting clear expectations
- give useful data for workforce planning
- show evidence for pay bands and rewards.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
One or more of the organisation's job roles are being mapped to a role category.	All roles in the organisation have been mapped to the Pathway role categories that fit best.	The results of mapping roles are being used to help make decisions about the workforce and planning for the future.

Role mapping is not a one-time job. It should change as your workforce changes. Even mapping one role gives useful insights and can help you spot where roles are needed.

Role mapping makes training easier, reduces duplication, and helps staff see the next step in their career. It also gives evidence for commissioners, regulators and planning.

### Pathway adopter insights

“ It made us sit down and ask: What makes someone a senior care worker? What should they know and be able to do? It's really shaped how we recruit new people and train our existing care workers. ”

“ Our specialist work didn't sit neatly within existing role categories... we influenced the development of a new category. ”

“ We weren't just mapping roles; we were deepening our understanding of what it really means to build a values-led workforce and everything that involves. ”

## 4.1.1 Making role mapping manageable

This section outlines steps to support the role mapping process. This might differ slightly, depending on your organisation and its needs.

### 1. Role mapping – learn from others

Organisations may find it helpful to explore real examples from others who have adopted the Pathway. Watching or reading their experiences can provide practical insights and ideas.

## Don't aim for perfection

Mapping your job roles to the Care Workforce Pathway isn't about finding an exact match between the knowledge, skills, and behaviours in the Pathway roles and your job descriptions. Trying to do that can quickly become overwhelming. We spent two days doing that, becoming word blind, before realising we needed a different approach.

Moving forward we stopped treating it like a matching game. The Pathway uses role categories, not precise job roles. Once we accepted that, we gave ourselves permission to step back and make informed judgments.

We focused on 'good enough' alignment rather than perfect matches and that made all the difference.

## Pathway adopter reflection

Tool	Description	Access
Care Workforce Pathway role mapping in practice	A collection of stories which show other organisations' experiences and useful hints and tips.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-role-mapping-in-practice.pdf">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-role-mapping-in-practice.pdf</a>

## 2. Role mapping – decide an approach

This might include considering how best to do this task, for example:

- Will it be done by reading information at a desk or will you talk to staff to get their opinions?
- Who needs to be involved?
- How much time will it take?
- What steps will you follow?



Managers really enjoyed being part of that process... they got to bring their valid experiences.

Tool	Description	Access
Care Workforce Pathway role mapping reflective question prompts	A tool to support planning the approach to role mapping.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-role-mapping-reflective-question-prompts.docx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-role-mapping-reflective-question-prompts.docx</a>

### 3. Role mapping – gather everything needed

This might include thinking about all the places staff get information about their job and how they learn what is expected of them. It's not just job descriptions. It also includes things like:

- staff handbooks
- policies and rules
- induction materials
- training guides.

These are the extra things that help staff understand how the organisation works and what good behaviour looks like.

### 4. Role mapping – choose the role(s)

This might include thinking about which job to map first. It could be the job most people do or the one that is hardest to hire for. You don't need to map every role, just start with one.

**“ Break it down into manageable chunks... set mini milestones. ”**

### 5. Role mapping – compare documents and record findings

This could include comparing your organisation's documents with the Pathway role categories. Look for:

- things that are the same
- things that are missing
- anything extra.

Then write down what you find. This information will help later with job adverts, staff reviews, and training plans.

If a job fits more than one category, choose the one that matches the job now or what it will look like in the future.

Also make a list of:

- any skills or behaviours that are missing
- any responsibilities that need adding.

**“ We took the skills assessment and our job description, and we just asked ourselves line by line... does this apply to us? Yes or no? ”**

Tool	Description	Access
Care Workforce Pathway role category characteristics	A summary of role categories to support role mapping.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-role-category-characteristics.pdf">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Care-Workforce-Pathway-role-category-characteristics.pdf</a>

## 5. Recruitment

This section looks at three themes to think about linked to Pathway adoption and recruitment:

Area	Themes	This helps organisations to:
Recruitment	<b>5.1 Adverts and interviews</b> Telling people about a job and talking to them to see if they are right for it.	<b>Find the right people and welcome them well</b>  Helping to reduce staff turnover, save money, and build a strong team from the start.
	<b>5.2 Job descriptions</b> A list that explains what a job is and what the person needs to do.	
	<b>5.3 Induction and onboarding</b> Helping new people learn about the job and settle in.	

### Recruitment and the Care Workforce Pathway

Recruitment is often the first impression people get of an organisation. Adverts, interviews, job descriptions, onboarding, and induction are all chances to show what an organisation cares about and how they support their staff.

Each one is a way to share organisational values and show how the Pathway helps people learn and grow.

Using the Pathway in recruitment helps to:

- show the organisation cares about quality and learning
- attract people who share the same organisational values
- make expectations clear from the start
- support career conversations and keep staff.

“

**The Care Workforce Pathway provides a clear career structure to review, revise, and re-define competencies.**

”

#### Across all areas of recruitment:

- Use the Pathway wording: show the organisation values good care and learning.
- Focus on values, not just experience: make it clear that the right attitude matters and training is given.
- Show career options and training: explain how the Pathway is used to support people to grow in their careers.
- Make expectations clear: use the Pathway knowledge, skills, and behaviours so people know what's expected.

## Adoption increased retention

Before Pathway adoption, despite having over 180 staff, due to leavers overall there was a workforce growth of just two employees over four years. After adopting the Pathway, we increased our overall workforce by 31 staff in 18 months and have had a 'real cultural shift' with fewer staff leaving.

## Pathway adopter reflection

## 5.1 Adverts and interviews

Job adverts and interviews are often the first time someone learns about the organisation. They show what the organisation cares about and what it's like to work there.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is considering how the Pathway can help improve job adverts and interview questions.	Adverts begin to include skills, knowledge, and behaviours linked to Pathway role categories. Interviews start to include Pathway values-based questions.	The Pathway is built into all recruitment processes. It can be seen in adverts, on the website, and in interviews.

Using the Pathway in adverts and interviews might include:

- Focusing on culture and careers, for example: talking about your workplace values, how you support staff, and the training you offer. Show that people can grow and progress.
- Setting clear expectations, for example: using the Pathway role categories or signpost to the Pathway. This helps candidates understand the skills and behaviours you expect and how interview questions will link to them.
- Using values-based recruitment: this approach looks at a person's values, behaviours, and attitudes. It checks if they fit with your workplace culture and expectations. It's proven to help find the right people. The Pathway's universal role values can support this. Make it clear that experience is not always needed and training will be given.
- Adding personas to recruitment packs: personas are short stories about real people in care roles. They show how someone can start, grow, and progress. They make the Pathway real and are great for adverts, interviews, and career chats. Example personas can be seen at the end of each role category.

## 5.2 Job descriptions

Job descriptions tell people what a role involves and what's expected. They're not just lists of tasks, they're a chance to show values, culture, and how someone can grow in their career.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is looking at how job descriptions can match Pathway role category knowledge, skills, and behaviours.	Job descriptions are being updated to show the skills, knowledge, and behaviours needed for each role. They also show how roles fit into a career in care.	Job descriptions include the Pathway's knowledge, skills, and behaviours. They set clear steps for progression and show training and learning opportunities.

Using the Pathway in job descriptions might include:

- Adding a role category, for example: "This role is the equivalent to Care Workforce Pathway role category, Care/Support Worker".
- Using Pathway knowledge, skills, and behaviours to describe the role.
- Showing career development opportunities linked to the Pathway, for example: highlighting your organisation's role category pathways (if you have them).

Some organisations worry about using Artificial Intelligence (AI), but others also see it as a helpful tool. AI can make some of the tasks easier but always check for accuracy and add a human touch to the final version.

**“ We find using AI supports the heavy lifting – it can read roles and job descriptions in seconds, identifying links, similarities, and gaps which lets us focus on critical thinking and implementation. ”**

## 5.3 Induction and onboarding

Induction and onboarding introduce new staff to organisational values, ways of working, and how their growth is supported. Linking the Pathway to induction helps staff understand expectations and see clear career opportunities from day one.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is thinking about how the Pathway can be included in induction and onboarding materials.	The Pathway becomes part of induction and onboarding. It links to role expectations, career conversations, and development plans.	The Pathway is a key part of induction and onboarding. Staff understand what it is, how it connects across the organisation, and how it helps them.

Using the Pathway to support induction and onboarding might include:

- Introducing the Pathway in supporting materials, for example: adding a short section explaining what the Pathway is and why it matters.
- Making the Pathway part of the induction process, for example: running a short session on how the Pathway supports skills and career progression.
- Showing how the Pathway links to training plans and supervision, so staff understand how it fits into their development.
- Using real examples or personas to make the Pathway relatable, for example: showing how someone in a similar role can grow using the Pathway.
- Using Pathway wording in induction packs, eLearning, and welcome sessions.
- Linking the Pathway to performance reviews, supervision, and career planning from the start, so staff see it as part of everyday work.

## 6. Training and development

This section looks at three themes to think about linked to Pathway adoption and training and development:

Area	Themes	This helps organisations to:
Training and development	<b>6.1 Supervisions and appraisals</b> Regular chats to check how staff are, to talk about what has gone well and any areas that can improve.	<b>Help staff learn and grow</b>  Get teams ready for the future by improving skills and building confidence.
	<b>6.2 Career conversations</b> Talking about what they might want to do in the future and the training or experience they might need to get there.	
	<b>6.3 Learning and development</b> Getting training and new skills to help them improve how they do their job or help them take steps towards a different one.	

### Training and development and the Care Workforce Pathway

Training and development means giving staff the skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs well and grow in their careers. It includes learning new things, improving current skills, and planning for future roles.

In every organisation there will be agreed ways to train and support staff. This section shows how the Pathway can strengthen what is already in place. The Pathway offers a shared language, clear expectations, and simple tools that make learning, supervision, and career conversations easier.

Using the Pathway helps staff understand what good looks like, see their next steps, and feel valued. It also helps organisations plan training well, avoid duplication, and build a strong, skilled workforce for the future.

#### Pathway adopter insights

“ Key to success when updating role profiles and making changes within the performance management processes was to have early conversations with staff, creating a sense of investment that this was a journey they were on together. ”

“ Staff felt undervalued and disengaged... nearly all training is now delivered face-to-face. Apprenticeship applications have risen by 70% since adopting the Pathway. ”

“ One of the most rewarding and clear impacts of investing in the training and development of our workforce has been seeing the increased confidence, especially where our support workers have progressed to team leader and management roles. ”

## 6.1 Supervisions and appraisals

Supervisions and appraisals are regular check-ins that help everyone understand how they are doing in their job. The word used to describe these types of meetings may be different depending on your organisation.

These types of meeting:

- show what skills and knowledge staff have
- show what they might need to develop or learn next
- are important because they make sure staff feel supported.

When staff feel supported, they can give safe, consistent, and high-quality care to the people they support. The Pathway can make these meetings easier and more effective.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
Pathway values or role category knowledge, skills, and behaviours are starting to be talked about as part of supervisions or appraisals.	Pathway values or role category knowledge, skills, and behaviours are now always used in supervisions or appraisals.	As part of supervisions and appraisals, the Pathway is also used to manage performance.

Using the Pathway to support supervisions and appraisals might include:

- Adding structure and clarity, for example: using the Pathway role categories to guide conversations. This helps managers and staff know what good looks like and what skills or behaviours are expected.
- Making career conversations easier, for example: encouraging staff to do a skills self-check based on the Pathway. This shows what they know and what they need to learn, making the discussion more focused.
- Supporting wellbeing and development, for example: including open questions linked to the Pathway, such as:
  - What is your biggest achievement in your job?
  - Where do you think more learning would help you?
- Identifying training needs, for example: using the Pathway to spot gaps in knowledge or behaviours and plan training that supports career growth.

You may also want to consider your organisation’s existing approach. This might involve thinking about how supervisions and appraisals take place now. This might include things that work well or areas that could be better.

For example:

- Ask managers and team leaders if they have the right support to talk about staff wellbeing. Do they need more training?
- Ask staff what they think about the process. What works for them?

**“** Reviewing our current practices raised its own questions in relation to how we support our managers and deputies, and how we provide development around coaching and mentoring which supports the supervisions and appraisals as well as career conversations! **”**

## 6.2 Career conversations

Career conversations help staff think about their future, find new opportunities, and plan the steps to get there. They make people feel supported and help them grow in their job.

A good career conversation will:

- look forward – focusing on what comes next, not just today
- make staff feel valued – showing that their career matters
- build a culture of learning – where everyone can grow and develop
- match training to goals – so staff get the right learning for their career plans; when career talks are done well, training is useful and not wasted.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
Career conversations are taking place or are starting to take place. Ways of working are being reviewed and areas for improvement identified i.e. training/development.	Career conversations happen the same way for all staff using the same approach, based on the Pathway.	Career conversations and ways of working are now part of the organisation’s culture and structure.

Using the Pathway to support career conversations might include:

- Giving a shared language, for example: using the Pathway role categories to explain what skills, knowledge, and behaviours are needed for each role. This makes talks clearer and easier.
- Showing clear benchmarks, for example: using the Pathway to help staff and managers see what needs to improve to reach career goals.
- Planning learning and development, for example: linking conversations to training options like courses, coaching, or mentoring shown in the Pathway.
- Making questions more focused, for example: asking open questions linked to the Pathway, such as, “What do you enjoy most about your job?” or “What might your next step be?”
- Sharing real examples of progression, for example: showing how staff can move into specialist or leadership roles using Pathway role categories. Share stories or case studies.
- Using Pathway tools and resources, for example: encouraging staff to complete a skills assessment or career development plan. Managers can use the career conversations toolkit to guide discussions.

**“ Career conversations have been particularly impactful, with many staff reporting increased job satisfaction and a stronger connection to their roles. In some cases, employees who had considered leaving decided to stay, demonstrating the Pathway’s role as an enabler for retention. ”**

You may also want to consider your organisation’s existing approach. Look at how career conversations happen now and see if they can be better.

For example:

- Do the people having these talks feel confident? Do they need more training or a simple guide?
- Is it clear who makes decisions about career moves? This helps manage expectations.

Tool	Description	Access
<b>Career development conversations toolkit</b>	Supports managers and staff to have more effective development conversations.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Empowered-leaders-and-managers/Career-development-conversations-toolkit.pptx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Empowered-leaders-and-managers/Career-development-conversations-toolkit.pptx</a>
<b>Career development plan template</b>	A template to set personal and professional goals, along with the steps needed to achieve them.	<a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Career-and-development/Career-development-plan-template.docx">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/resources/documents/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Workforce-Pathway/Career-and-development/Career-development-plan-template.docx</a>

## 6.3 Learning and development

Learning and development help build a team that is skilled and confident. Some training is required by law to keep people safe. Other training depends on the job and career goals. Training helps staff:

- do their job well
- learn new skills
- move forward in their career.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
The organisation is looking at the suggested learning and development for Pathway role categories that match its own roles.	Mapping roles in the organisation to the Pathway's role categories has started to identify gaps and opportunities in learning and development.	The organisation plans and organises its learning and development around the suggested learning for the Pathway role categories, as a minimum.

Using the Pathway to support learning and development might include:

- Setting clear standards for skills and training, for example: checking if your training plans match the Pathway role categories.
- Linking training to future goals, for example: using the Pathway to show how learning helps staff progress into new roles.
- Showing clear routes for progression, for example: adding skills from the Pathway into training plans, like leadership training for future managers or digital skills for everyone.
- Spotting gaps or duplication, for example: reviewing current training against the Pathway to see what's missing or repeated.
- Checking if training works, for example: asking staff for feedback and making training simple and easy to follow so it saves time and money.

You may also want to consider your organisation’s existing approach. Think about how learning and training happen in your organisation.

For example:

- Who decides who gets training and when?
- What are those decisions based on?

**“ We realised that we tended to respond to staff training requests without any real understanding of how and when that would be utilised in practice and add value to their career path. This can be demoralising for the staff member as they can’t practise the learned skills and can be costly for the organisation. Having a structured career route can support those conversations. ”**

Tool	Description	Access
Skills assessments	A tool for staff to use to reflect on strengths and areas for development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="#">New to care - skills assessment</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Care or support worker - skills assessment</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Supervisor or leader - skills assessment</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Practice leader - skills assessment</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Deputy manager - skills assessment</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Registered manager - skills assessment</a></li> </ul>

Resource	Description	Access
Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) Guidance	This guidance outlines the criteria and process for accessing the LDSS.	<a href="#">LDSS Guidance</a>

## 7. Pathway advocacy

This section looks at role modelling and its link to Pathway adoption:

Area	Themes	This helps organisations to:
<b>Pathway advocacy</b>	<b>Role modelling</b> Showing others the right way to act by doing it yourself.	<b>Share good practice and support the Pathway</b>  Helping build trust, attract good people, and show the organisation as a leader in care.

### 7.1 Role modelling and the Care Workforce Pathway

When an organisation uses the Pathway and shares what they've learned, it helps the whole care sector. It brings people together, creates one common language, and makes it easier for everyone to work together.

This approach:

- helps staff understand the Pathway aims and benefits
- creates a workplace where learning and career development are normal
- encourages other organisations to follow by example, which helps improve care everywhere.

By sharing success, it shows that care is a career with clear steps, options, and support. This makes the sector stronger and more united.

Use the table below to think about where your organisation is now and where you want it to be in the future:

Light adoption	Medium adoption	Full adoption
Senior leaders and managers are talking openly about the Pathway and encouraging staff to discuss how it works and why it's helpful.	Senior leaders and managers give updates on how things are going with Pathway adoption and listen to feedback from staff.	The organisation shares learning and good practice with others.

Role modelling and being a Pathway advocate might include:

- Talking about the Pathway, for example: mentioning it in team meetings, newsletters, and giving leadership updates so staff know what it is and why it matters.
- Starting conversations, for example: asking teams what they think about the Pathway, using one-to-one meetings to link career goals to it, and encouraging questions.
- Collecting feedback and acting on it, for example: asking staff what works well and what could be better, sharing real stories of how the Pathway has helped, and using feedback to improve training and workforce planning.
- Sharing success and learning, for example: posting updates on your organisation's website, sharing good practice inside and outside the organisation, and attending networking events like Skills for Care Adopter Network sessions.
- Making the Pathway part of the culture, for example: including Pathway updates in leadership talks, linking it to performance reviews and organisation plans, and working with partners and networks to share learning.

### Pathway adopter insights

“ It's a career framework that is tailored to care. It really helps us when we talk to other organisations as we now know we're speaking the same language. ”

“ Would we do it again? In a heartbeat. This has been the start of a great impactful journey that is just at the beginning. ”

“ This is a continuous journey... it's already helping us strengthen what we do and align with sector-wide standards. ”

Information correct at time of publication, March 2026