

Beginning the Care Workforce Pathway journey at East Riding of Yorkshire Council

East Riding of Yorkshire Council is at an early stage in its work with the Care Workforce Pathway, using it to strengthen alignment, clarity, and consistency across a large and complex adult social care system.

Demand for care in the East Riding of Yorkshire region continues to rise, driven by an ageing population. The council operate a wide range of adult social care services and has seen ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. Meanwhile, wider organisational and regulatory demands have reinforced the importance of strengthening quality, leadership, and workforce confidence.

In response to these challenges, East Riding of Yorkshire Council joined the Care Workforce Pathway support programme. System leads Tina Tate, Strategic Resourcing Manager for Adult Social Care and Health, and Julia Miller, Operations Review and Projects Officer, worked alongside Skills for Care to explore how the Pathway could support with both immediate workforce planning and longer-term ambitions.

Tina says: “Rather than seeking immediate large-scale change, we set out to understand the Pathway and how we could use it in a practical, realistic, and sustainable way.”

A key early step was to raise awareness of the Pathway. An introductory session for council teams, Integrated Care Board partners, care providers, education partners and Department of Work and Pensions colleagues was delivered online to explain the Pathway and learn how it can support recruitment, retention, career development, and workforce planning.

Julia says: “The session was underpinned by a discussion about values, helping us link the Pathway to what good care looks like in practice. By exploring values such as compassion, honesty, and respect we could see how it wasn’t just about career structure but about supporting a shared culture of care.”

Participants then shared the practical actions they would take in their own organisation to help build momentum across the system and reduce any perception that it required significant or immediate transformation.

These early discussions highlighted some key priorities. There was a clear need to improve access to consistent, high-quality training, particularly for smaller providers. Different approaches to roles, expectations, and development were creating variation across the system, and career pathways were not always clear or easy to navigate. There was also a shared ambition to strengthen how care work is understood and

valued locally, both for those already working in the sector and those considering it as a career.

The Pathway provided a clear structure for aligning job roles, skills, and progression across different organisations. It also created an opportunity to connect existing activity, reduce duplication, and support more joined-up workforce planning.

Within the council's own adult social care services, managers across homecare, residential care, and supported living services started to map roles against the Pathway role categories and consider ways in which the Pathway could be used within day-to-day practice. This helped build confidence and understanding, positioning the council to lead by example as the Pathway was adopted by providers across the system.

To support teams further, the council developed a set of accessible resources, including a “starter pack” to guide role mapping and an online hub to host tools, templates, and examples all in one place, supporting consistency and ease of access.

As this work has progressed, several challenges have emerged. Capacity remains a key issue, with workforce leads managing competing priorities and with limited time for developmental activity. There is also variation across providers in how ready they feel to engage, and existing learning provision is not yet fully aligned to the Pathway. These are recognised as important factors that can be addressed over time.

Tina says: “Even at this early stage, we are seeing increased awareness of the Pathway which is helping to create a more consistent way of describing roles and career development. Our relationships across the system have strengthened through this shared activity, and there is increasing interest in how the Pathway can support local priorities.”

The next phase of work will see a system-wide steering group established to guide and co-ordinate activity. Plans include aligning training more closely with the role categories, introducing a train-the-trainer model, and creating a central point of support for organisations as they start to use the Pathway. There is also a growing focus on career progression and more efficient workforce movement, using the Pathway to better understand how people develop within and across care roles.

Julia says: “Beginning the journey is what matters most. We started simply by trying to build clarity, confidence, and consistency across the system, laying the foundations for longer-term improvement.”

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's experience shows that taking time to establish strong foundations can be a valuable first step. By encouraging collaboration and building shared understanding, the system is creating the conditions needed for meaningful and lasting change and improvement.