Outcomes, impact and learning

Overview of actions

Sheffcare's recruitment transformation has delivered measurable results – improved retention, stronger compliance and enhanced staff experience. It's also embedded continuous learning and future-focused strategies for sustainable workforce development.

What's been achieved?

- **Centralised recruitment fully embedded** – Recruitment moved from nine separate homes to a dedicated HR team, creating consistency and freeing managers from administrative burden.
- **Structured onboarding introduced** – A three-day induction replaced the previous one-day format, ensuring new starters receive essential training before entering care homes.
- **Buddy system formalised** – Informal arrangements evolved into a standardised process with clear expectations and pay enhancements for buddies.
- **Rapid applicant engagement achieved** – Applications are now acknowledged within one working day, reducing dropouts and improving candidate experience.

What impact has this had

- **Retention improved dramatically** – Probationary turnover fell from 42% to 14% in the six months after the new induction process was introduced in 2025, reducing recruitment churn and costs.
- **Staff readiness strengthened** – New starters arrive better prepared and confident, with realistic expectations of care work, improving safety and quality from day one.
- **Manager confidence rebuilt** – Transparent communication (weekly updates and shared applicant emails) restored trust in the centralised process.
- **Cultural alignment reinforced** – Values-based interviews and induction embed Sheffcare's principles of dignity, respect and person-centred care into daily practice.

Measuring what matters

- **Comprehensive metrics tracked** – Time-to-hire, probationary retention, induction satisfaction and staff engagement are monitored to assess impact and guide improvements.
- **Addressing recruitment timelines** – Since Sheffcare began tracking, vacancy-to-start times have ranged from 3 to 187 days, averaging 44 days. Night care roles often exceed 60 days, while bank and domestic roles start faster (under 50 days). Flexi-care positions show the longest delays.
- **Continuous feedback loops established** – Post-induction surveys and buddy feedback inform refinements to onboarding and support systems.
- **Story-based learning** – Internal progression stories and debriefs from complex days are used to surface practical lessons and are fed back into coaching and training.
- **Qualitative insights gathered** – Managers provide feedback on team integration and performance, complementing HR's data-driven monitoring.
- **Annual reviews embedded** – Staff surveys and induction data shape workforce planning and development priorities.

> **"We send a SurveyMonkey link after induction and check in at one and two months. People still contact us months later because they know it's an open-door policy for support."**
>
> **Amelia Charlesworth-Dakin,** HR Marketing Co-ordinator, Sheffcare

Delivering lasting change

- **Phased implementation ensured sustainability** – Pilots and feedback loops allowed gradual rollout, reducing resistance and embedding reforms effectively.
- **Collaborative design fostered ownership** – Managers co-designed interview templates and onboarding processes, strengthening engagement and trust.
- **Strategic investment supported growth** – Funding directed to HR capacity, training and digital systems, which reinforced long-term workforce development.
- **Future-focused initiatives underway** – Plans include expanding volunteer roles and introducing resident involvement in recruitment to deepen person-centred care.

> **"We're planning some more intensive interview skills training to improve consistency across homes."**
>
> **Merewyn Scafe,** Director of HR, Sheffcare

Key learning

The most significant outcomes of Sheffcare's transformation were new starters being more culturally aligned with the organisation, and staff being more confident with the new recruitment process.

- **Values embedded in practice** – Person-centred principles shaped interviews and onboarding, creating a consistent culture across all homes.
- **Improved team cohesion** – Shared values and structured onboarding strengthened collaboration and confidence among staff.
- **Sustained engagement** – Transparent communication and inclusive processes reinforced trust and long-term commitment to organisational goals.

"I don't think there's anything we'd do differently, but the key is to be really proactive and flexible. Be prepared – it's not a fast job. There's a lot involved, and it's pretty labour intensive."

Merewyn Scafe, Director of HR, Sheffcare