

Pilot, refinement and embedding



Overview of actions

Sheffcare introduced changes through a phased approach – piloting new ways of working, refining them with feedback, and embedding successful elements into everyday operations for lasting impact.

Testing what works

- **Piloted revised interview questions** – Sheffcare tested updated, values-based interview questions in selected homes before full rollout, ensuring alignment with CQC standards and organisational values.
- **Trialed centralised induction and buddy system** – The new three-day induction and named buddy approach were introduced gradually, starting with small cohorts to gauge impact on confidence and retention.
- **Gathered structured feedback** – Post-induction surveys via SurveyMonkey and early check-ins at one and two months provided real-time insights into onboarding experience and training effectiveness.
- **Benchmarked externally** – HR reviewed examples from Skills for Care and other providers during workshops to validate changes and maintain compliance.



Refining the approach

- **Adjusted induction format** – Based on feedback, Sheffcare shortened daily induction sessions to end at 15:30 instead of 16:30 and added new topics such as sexual harassment and mental health awareness.
- **Iterated interview process** – Managers co-designed and refined interview templates through HR-led workshops, with drafts circulated for feedback before agreeing on a final set.
- **Improved onboarding materials** – Welcome packs and ‘About Me’ forms were added to personalise support and address cultural or practical needs identified during early trials.

“When we first took recruitment away from managers, they felt a loss of control. Weekly updates and copying them into every applicant email helped rebuild trust and show we were actively managing the process.”

Merewyn Scafe, Director of HR, Sheffcare

Expanding and embedding

- **Scaled centralised recruitment across all homes** – After successful pilots, Sheffcare rolled out the centralised HR-led recruitment model organisation-wide, supported by structured governance and tracking systems.
- **Formalised buddy system** – Initially informal, buddying became a standardised process with clear expectations, training and pay enhancements for buddies.
- **Integrated continuous improvement** – Regular audits, monthly manager meetings and HR workshops embedded recruitment reforms into everyday practice, ensuring consistency and compliance.
- **Linked to long-term workforce planning** – Insights from pilots informed broader strategies, including career pathways, LDSS-funded training, and plans to replicate recruitment success for volunteer roles.



Key decisions

- Piloted induction and buddying with small cohorts before full rollout, allowing the organisation to test the approach and refine it based on early learning.
- Adjusted induction content and timing based on feedback and surveys, ensuring the programme stayed relevant, accessible and responsive to staff needs.

Key learning

Iterative piloting and phased rollout ensured reforms were relevant, reduced resistance and embedded effectively.

- **Improved relevance** – Testing changes in small cohorts allowed adjustments before full implementation, aligning processes with real-world needs.
- **Reduced resistance** – The gradual transition to a centralised approach gave managers and staff time to adapt, building trust and ownership.
- **Sustainable embedding** – Continuous feedback loops supported ongoing refinement, keeping practices current and responsive to workforce challenges.

“We meet every Friday to review and refine our recruitment process. We’re constantly updating and learning from feedback.”

Merewyn Scafe, Director of HR, Sheffcare

