

Recommendations



Practical approach toolkit: Centralising recruitment

These recommendations are based on proven practice and lessons learned from Sheffcare's successful reforms in recruitment, induction, staff development and retention. Each recommendation includes practical steps to achieve measurable impact. For further detail, refer to the building blocks outlined in the toolkit.

At the end of this resource, you'll find a list of resources to support implementation.

| Planning and preparing | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Establish a clear case for centralised recruitment to improve speed, consistency and compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Analyse turnover, probationary exits and time-to-hire data to evidence urgency.■ Present a business case linking recruitment reform to retention and CQC compliance. | | | |
| Action | | | |

| Planning and preparing | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Secure board and leadership commitment by linking recruitment reform to strategic workforce goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Present projected savings from reduced turnover and improved compliance. ■ Highlight risks of inaction, including CQC rating impact and agency cost escalation. ■ Share success stories from similar providers to build confidence in the approach. | | | |
| Action | | | |
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| Planning and preparing | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>If it doesn't exist already, create a dedicated HR team to manage recruitment and free managers for care delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assign clear responsibilities for advertising, screening and compliance checks. ■ Implement rapid response protocols – acknowledge applications within one working day. ■ Use structured, values-based interview templates for fairness and cultural alignment. | | | |

Action

| Planning and preparing | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>If you are a multi-site service, develop a phased implementation roadmap to embed recruitment reforms sustainably across all locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Break the rollout into pilot, refinement and full implementation stages. ■ Schedule feedback checkpoints at one, three and six months to inform any adjustments. ■ Align timelines with training availability and operational priorities to minimise disruption. | | | |

| Action |
|------------------------------|
| Empty space for action items |

| Digital and technology | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Adopt simple, scalable digital tools to streamline recruitment and maintain audit readiness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain a shared recruitment tracker for real-time visibility across all homes. ■ Embed digital confidence training into induction to reduce new starter anxiety and improve engagement. | | | |

Action

| Digital and technology | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Provide digital onboarding resources to improve accessibility and engagement for new starters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Host induction materials and policies on a secure, mobile-friendly portal. ■ Include short video tutorials for key systems (e.g., payroll, care planning software). ■ Offer optional pre-induction eLearning modules to build confidence before day one. | | | |

Action

| Financing and investment | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Plan long-term sustainability by embedding recruitment costs into core workforce budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocate recurring funds for HR capacity and onboarding materials rather than short-term grants. ■ Link budget planning to projected savings from reduced turnover and agency reliance. ■ Include recruitment KPIs in financial reporting to demonstrate return on investment. | | | |

Action

| Financing and investment | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Leverage external funding streams to support career development and retention initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maximise Apprenticeship and Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) funding for diplomas and leadership programmes. ■ Explore partnerships with local colleges for subsidised training and recruitment pipelines. ■ Apply for sector-specific grants to enhance digital onboarding and compliance systems. | | | |

| Action | | | |
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| Financing and investment | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Reinvest efficiency savings into staff development and recognition programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Redirect funds saved from reduced churn into CPD opportunities and buddy incentives. ■ Use cost-benefit analysis to justify investment in structured induction and career pathways. ■ Publicise reinvestment decisions internally to reinforce organisational commitment to staff growth. | | | |

Action

| Involving key stakeholders | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Engage managers early to co-design recruitment and onboarding processes for shared ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Host workshops to refine interview templates and induction content collaboratively. ■ Share pilot results and invite feedback before full rollout to build trust. ■ Maintain visibility through weekly updates and shared applicant correspondence. | | | |

Action

| Involving key stakeholders | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Include front line staff in shaping onboarding to ensure relevance and practicality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use surveys and informal conversations to capture real-world needs and challenges. ■ Invite staff to contribute ideas for buddying and cultural integration activities. ■ Recognise contributions publicly to reinforce engagement and value. | | | |

Action

| Involving key stakeholders | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Build external partnerships to strengthen recruitment pipelines and credibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaborate with local colleges and job centres for candidate sourcing and training. ■ Engage Skills for Care and sector networks for best practice and funding opportunities. ■ Use community events and forums to promote vacancies and organisational values. | | | |

Action

| Governance and implementation | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Define clear roles and responsibilities for HR and managers to ensure accountability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assign HR to manage adverts, screening and compliance checks centrally. ■ Retain managers' responsibility for final interviews and team integration. ■ Document role expectations in onboarding packs and policy guides. | | | |
| Action | | | |
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| Governance and implementation | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Establish escalation and troubleshooting processes to address recruitment bottlenecks quickly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Define clear escalation routes for delays in DBS, references or induction scheduling. ■ Provide HR-led support sessions for managers to resolve issues collaboratively. ■ Track recurring challenges and feed insights into process improvements. | | | |
| Action | | | |
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| Workforce | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Recruit for values and personal qualities rather than solely experience or seniority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use structured, values-based interview templates to assess empathy and reliability. ■ Share organisational principles during recruitment to attract culturally-aligned candidates. ■ Highlight progression opportunities to position care as a career, not just a job. | | | |

Action

| Workforce | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Promote diversity by including all roles in recruitment and development initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advertise opportunities for carers, nurses, domestic staff and activity co-ordinators equally to all to apply. ■ Offer CPD benefits and recognition across all job categories to encourage participation. ■ Use inclusive language and imagery in recruitment campaigns to reflect workforce diversity. | | | |

Action

| Workforce | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Strengthen onboarding with personalised support to improve new starter confidence and early retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Capture cultural and practical needs for tailored integration. ■ Schedule early check-ins at one and two months to address concerns proactively. | | | |

Action

| Workforce | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Embed retention strategies into everyday practice to reduce turnover and build stability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Normalise wellbeing and career conversations during team meetings and supervision. ■ Provide visible recognition for buddying, mentoring and additional responsibilities. ■ Monitor probationary retention and act quickly on feedback to address early concerns. | | | |

Action

| Workforce | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Create clear career pathways to support internal progression and succession planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce acting-up programmes for aspiring leaders with structured competency checklists. ■ Offer funded diplomas and specialist courses through internal training portals. ■ Share success stories of internal progression during induction and staff communications. | | | |

Action

| Workforce | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Promote a culture of recognition to maintain morale and engagement across all roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Celebrate achievements through certificates, newsletters and appreciation events. ■ Offer CPD credits and small incentives – including higher levels of pay - for additional responsibilities like buddying. ■ Share success stories internally to reinforce organisational values and career potential. | | | |

Action

| Pilot, refinement and embedding | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Test new recruitment and onboarding processes in small cohorts before full rollout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pilot centralised induction and buddy system in selected homes to gauge impact. ■ Trial updated interview templates and gather feedback from managers and candidates. ■ Use early retention and satisfaction data to validate effectiveness before scaling. | | | |

Action

| Pilot, refinement and embedding | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Gather structured feedback during pilots to refine processes and improve relevance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use post-induction surveys and one-month check-ins to capture staff experience. ■ Hold debrief sessions with managers and buddies to identify practical improvements. ■ Benchmark against sector best practice to ensure compliance and cultural alignment. | | | |
| Action | | | |
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| Pilot, refinement and embedding | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Embed successful practices into everyday operations through governance and continuous learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Formalise buddying, induction and recruitment templates into policy and training packs. ■ Schedule regular audits and monthly reviews to maintain consistency and compliance. ■ Share success stories and lessons learned internally to sustain engagement and trust. | | | |

Action

| Outcomes, impact and learning | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Track recruitment and retention metrics to measure impact and inform future improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor time-to-hire, probationary retention and induction satisfaction monthly. ■ Use dashboards or spreadsheets for real-time data and trend analysis. ■ Share data with leadership and managers to maintain accountability and engagement. | | | |

Action

| Outcomes, impact and learning | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Capture qualitative feedback to assess cultural change alongside quantitative metrics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use staff surveys and buddy feedback to gauge morale and confidence. ■ Hold focus groups or informal check-ins to explore onboarding experiences. ■ Combine insights with hard data for a holistic view of progress. | | | |

Action

| Outcomes, impact and learning | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| <p>Embed continuous learning by reviewing outcomes and sharing success stories internally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Schedule annual reviews to evaluate recruitment reforms and workforce stability. ■ Highlight improvements in newsletters and meetings to reinforce organisational values. ■ Use lessons learned to refine processes and inform future workforce planning. | | | |

Action

Further support

- [Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set \(ASC-WDS\)/Workforce Intelligence reports](#) – Use workforce data to evidence the case for change, benchmark your performance with others (e.g., how retention rates compare) and identify issues, opportunities and risks.
- [Recruitment support](#) – Access this comprehensive suite of recruitment support, which provides tools, resources and best-practice guidance. This will help your organisation to effectively attract, assess and retain staff who demonstrate the right values and behaviours for high-quality care.
- [Induction](#) – Use this comprehensive induction toolkit, which offers structured check lists, role-specific guidance and inclusive best-practice resources to effectively onboard new starters.
- [Developing your workforce](#) – Visit this comprehensive online hub which offers free wellbeing resources, including guidance, peer support frameworks and resilience-building materials – alongside funded learning opportunities like fully covered courses and CPD for adult social care staff.
- [Wellbeing](#) – Access this comprehensive online hub, which offers curated, sector-specific tools and guidance. This includes wellbeing resource finders, peer-support frameworks, resilience-building materials and practical toolkits to help managers and teams embed workplace wellbeing effectively.
- [Retaining your workforce](#) – Access practical guidance, tools and resources to help improve staff retention through positive workplace culture, career development opportunities and effective leadership strategies.