

Sheffield Care Academy for Recruitment, Education, and Support (Sheffield CARES) – Overview and Implementation

Background

Sheffield has approximately 17,500 social care sector jobs. With people living longer, Sheffield is projected to need 23 percent more job posts by 2035. Additionally, 27 percent of our workforce is over 55 and are likely to leave the workforce in the next 10 years (approximately 3,700 of them). This is on top of the currently high vacancy rates (Sheffield's vacancy rate is 10.2 percent (approximately 1,400 posts). Compared to other local authority areas in Yorkshire and the Humber, Sheffield has higher rates of sick days and zero-hour contracts and a lower average pay rate. We also have higher staff turnover rates, and only 47 percent of our staff are reported to hold a relevant adult social care qualification, which is lower than Yorkshire and Humber, but higher than England¹.

The demand for long-term care is rising, and life expectancy and years of ill health are increasing too. To meet this growing need, the adult social care workforce needs to increase by 36 percent (580,000 jobs). However, the adult social care sector faces challenges that hinder providers from recruiting and retaining skilled staff and delivering high-quality services.

Care and health career academies have been established to address these challenges. These academies aim to cultivate highly skilled and dedicated staff who can provide personalised support to those in need. By doing so, they hope to overcome the obstacles faced by the social care sector, making it easier for those who aspire to work in care to find fulfilling employment opportunities. Academies are designed to align with industrial needs, leverage best practices, and ensure learners remain engaged and motivated throughout their journey.

Sheffield Care Academy for Recruitment, Education & Support (Sheffield CARES)

Sheffield CARES will be launched in October 2024. It is a partnership between health and care organisations in Sheffield (including colleges, universities, user-led organisations, providers, citizens, and people who use services).

Through this partnership, Sheffield CARES will:

- Promote a career in care (pipeline)
- Improve the recruitment process for applicants and providers (recruitment)
- Support staff to stay working in care (retention)
- Improve the staff training offer (develop)
- Promote the use of technology and innovation (innovation)
- Improve data collection and usage (data).

Sheffield CARES offers a standardised approach to job advice, learning and development, work experience and apprenticeships, whilst also providing opportunities to gain management, specialist and leadership training. Sheffield CARES will use innovation and champion best practice to inform service delivery.

Sheffield CARES is the one-stop shop for care workers in Sheffield. It aims to bring together all support for care workers, to empower them to develop and value themselves. It is the hub to drive activity to develop the care sector workforce in Sheffield. This will help to address the longstanding issues affecting the adults care workforce in Sheffield.



¹ Data from the Skills for Care, Adult Social Care Workforce Dataset 2022/23. Please note that only 43 percent of providers in Sheffield fill out this dataset and that new data will be published in October 2024.

Delivery Model

Sheffield CARES will be established as website, which supports care workers and providers on the core themes identified above. It is a partnership across Sheffield to pull together existing workforce development projects, and work to create improvements where gaps are identified through project work.

Its mission is to retain, recruit and grow an empowered social care workforce that provides outstanding care for the citizens of Sheffield, via the Sheffield Care Academy for Recruitment, Education and Support.

The development of the academy has been initially split into 2 phases. An initial minimum viable product for launch in October 2024, followed by a roadshow to promote the academy to care workers. Phase 2 projects will be implemented across 2024/2025.

For launch, in October 2024 and through the care worker roadshows, Sheffield CARES will:

- Create a Sheffield CARES website which brings together all existing relevant programmes and information into one place for Sheffield care workers and providers. This website will include a web portal for staff to upload their training certificates and receive benefits.
- Develop a Sheffield CARES launch event for 24th October 2024.
- Progressing phase-one projects such as promoting social care induction programmes and providing social care job vacancies on the website.
- Create baseline workforce data to understand where the biggest issues are in Sheffield.
- Continuing to work collaboratively with Sheffield care workers to ensure that their voices drive the work of the academy.

Phase 2 plans for the academy are outlined in Appendix 1 - Phase 2 - Sheffield CARES Delivery.

Sheffield CARES Governance

The development and implementation of the Care Academy is being led by the Workforce Development Team at Sheffield City Council. The academy is strategically guided by a Governance Board made up of key stakeholders across Sheffield.

Collaboration, co-production and co-delivery is at the heart of this work. Project work and delivery is guided by stakeholder experts through working groups as needed, and other Sheffield partners are responsible for delivering some key elements of the Care Academy.

Implementation Plan

Governance Board – provides strategic oversight. Chaired by the Chief Social Worker.	Meets every 2 months, since May 2024
Care Academy event launch – launch of new Sheffield CARES website.	24 October 2024
Care worker training portal launch – launch of a web portal where care workers can upload their training certificates and get rewards for the more training they do.	Nov 2024
Roadshow – promoting the care academy to care workers in Sheffield localities.	2024 - 2025
Provider portal launch – launch of web portal where providers can access policies and information.	2025
Care worker group – set up engagement with care workers to co-lead the care academy work.	2024 - 2025
Report to Committee on progress & to agree how the Care Academy should be delivered from March 2025 – to cover funding and whether the Care Academy should remain within the Council.	2025
Evaluation and monitoring of the Care Academy – establishing a baseline, and evaluating progress.	Jan 2025



Organisation

In January 2024 the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee agreed a 2-year commitment to commission a care academy for Sheffield. The Care Academy has been established and funded by Sheffield City Council by initially using Market Sustainability Improvement Fund for 2024/25.

The intention is for the Care Academy to become self-sustaining. Invest-to-save proposals will be considered as part of the development of the Care Academy. Proposals to explore whether the Care Academy should become an independent organisation and be joint funded by other key partners across Sheffield will be explored in 2025.

Appendix 1 - Phase 2 - Sheffield CARES Delivery

Theme	Milestone/action	By when
Sheffield Care Academy for Education, Recruitment and Support		
Organisation and funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore whether the Academy will operate as an independent organisation, co-funded through Sheffield partners and grants. Apply for funding bids for new training/projects in partnership with providers - VocTech, Rayne Foundation, Innovation in Practice bid. 	2025 2025
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Governance Board every 2 months for strategic leadership of the Care Academy, and host co-design workshops as needed. Academy roadshow to promote offer to care workers. Establish care worker network/forums to guide Academy projects. Care Academy communication strategy, e.g. social media/bulletins/blog posts – monthly updates. Host in-person workforce provider forums to share best practice on different topics e.g. flexible working, international recruitment. 	ongoing 2024 – 2025 2025 2025 2024 – 2025
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care worker web portal for staff to upload their training certificates to receive benefits and rewards. Provider portal (based on subscription) including policies, HR information, best practice templates (such as flexible working), international recruitment information and support, information management system/recruitment system, tech workplace champions, CQC process etc. Host live job vacancies on website. Secure recruitment portal to allow care workers to note availability for extra hours (alternative to agency staff). Gather and promote innovative practice. 	2024 2025 2024 2025 2024 – 2025
Attracting people into social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Sheffield Care Ambassador programme (with training) with diverse/representative ambassadors including young people, and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic. Develop social care work experience programme in partnership with See It Be It and other work experience programmes in Sheffield. Support apprentices into social care jobs, in partnership with providers, Sheffield College, and South Yorkshire Apprenticeship Hub. To include NEETS aged 16-18 and Looked After Children. Connect volunteers with suitable placements within care settings. Coordinate health placements for nurses, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists in social care settings in partnership with South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board. Media campaign for becoming a care worker – paid social media adverts through the Council, billboards promoting a career in care (be the missing piece campaign), open days in care homes. 	2025 2024 – 2025 2025 2024 – 2025 2024 – 2025 2025- 2026
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate, host and attend a programme of social care job fairs across Sheffield. Host a pre-screening application process to link applicants with interviews/ jobs. 	2025 2025



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support programme delivery, including Sector Routeways and Sector Based Work Academy Programmes. Support Looked After Children into social care jobs, and minorities into leadership positions. 	Ongoing 2025
<i>International recruitment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop training for international social care workers to assist them in their understanding of UK social care norms e.g. food preparation. Work with the ICB's ReSTORE programme to offer social care nursing roles to refugee nurses living in Sheffield. In partnership with ADASS support displaced workers to find a new job when a provider's sponsorship licence is revoked. 	2024 – 2025
Workforce training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create better links to the current training offer on the Sheffield Cares website (with an agreed quality process for promoting training providers). Explore embedding a learning portal into the website. Review gaps in the current training provision for Sheffield Care sector and develop training to support, including training in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> supporting people with sensory impairments single-handed care rehabilitation person-centred care, specifically positive risk-taking, and dignity and respect. Deliver 'train the trainer' courses for mandatory training modules (i.e. moving and handling) to ensure that all care staff are receiving consistent high-quality training. Support staff to access functional skills training to improve numeracy and literacy, and digital skills. Develop bespoke virtual reality training relevant to the social care sector. Support staff to embed learning through reflective supervision, peer support networks, team leader champions role. 	2024 - 2025
<i>Leadership and Management Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a social care management/leadership training offer, including a specific Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic managers and leaders' programme. To include peer reflective supervision training and how to develop a positive workplace culture. 	2025 - 2026
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run annual Sheffield Care Awards. Create a Pay Charter for care workers based on role-based competency frameworks (based on the Government's care workforce pathway). Discount access to Council or ICB's Employment Assistance Programmes (EAP) for providers. Support a basic wellbeing offer for care staff through Social Care Heroes, the care worker network and website - promote accredited EAP providers, and staff retention/wellbeing programmes such as Cycle to Work schemes. Create virtual/physical staff rooms for home care workers. 	2024 – 2026
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the impact of the Academy by creating a baseline report, and through regular evaluation and monitoring. Run annual Sheffield care worker surveys. Create a Sheffield workforce data dashboard. Promote the Skills for Care Adult Social Care – Workforce Dataset with providers. Streamline data collection from the Council and Government to providers. Promote social care research in Sheffield and influence what research is done based on Sheffield provider needs. Develop grant funding and research applications to champion best practice. 	2024 – 2025



Appendix 2: Engagement Activity

To create Sheffield's Care Academy, we set up a Governance Board, made up of Sheffield's care partners, to provide strategic oversight.

In June-July 2024, 45 unique people attended six co-design workshops where we worked through the goals for the Care Academy, the current offer, where there were gaps/issues, and what needed to happen next. These workshops focused on:

- promoting a career in care (pipeline recruitment)
- improving the recruitment process for applicants and providers (recruitment)
- supporting staff to stay working in care (retention)
- improving the staff training offer (training)
- promoting the use of technology and innovation (innovation)
- improving data collection and usage (data).

Some overall themes from these workshops were that we should:

- Work collaboratively by joining up and promote existing programmes/ work
- Make the Care Academy the one-stop shop for everything
- Streamline and standardise processes for providers (especially HR processes)
- Recognise staff for the work that they do (including through their wages)
- Integrate social care and health, but be careful not to lose the focus on care
- Set up projects on – agency staff, vacancy information, overseas recruitment, promoting care, barriers to entering the workforce, training, using research, staff wages etc.

In September 2024, we spoke with 17 care workers where they said that they loved working in care but that they did not feel valued. They highlighted that they wanted the Care Academy to provide live job vacancies (including picking up hours at short notice) and a virtual staff room for care workers to connect.

In September 2024, 151 people answered a survey on the development of the Care Academy. When asked to rank their priorities for a Care Academy they said that their:

- **Top priority was to access better or more training and development opportunities.**

Followed by:

- Creating a hub for information and advice relating to social care for Sheffield.
- Better support for wellbeing *such as* better benefits, support groups, personal safety, mental health support/counselling, recognition events, workshops, flexible working.
- Supporting to promote pay and conditions.
- Engagement tool to listen to care workers more.
- Follow up conversations also said that respondents wanted a place where providers could sign post international care workers to gain more information about visa's and working in the UK.
- 94% of respondents thought that care workers should receive better support for their wellbeing.
- 93% of respondents wanted social care jobs advertised via the Care Academy website.
- 60% of respondents wanted support to apply for social care jobs.
- 78% of respondents thought that the quality of the training for care workers was good.

Written responses:

- *"I think that's where the Academy will help, a place where carers can go to be heard because you can easily fall into depression as a carer . A lot is expected from you but no one thinks you also a human being with emotions and feelings."*
- *Receiving extra allowance to care for themselves or some free wellbeing perks like free body massages, free gym subscriptions*
- *Have a free counselling phone number and website for carers, mentoring hub*

Demographics of respondents:



Care Experience	Years Working In Care:	Gender:	Ages:
27% Home/Domiciliary Care 24% Supported Living 10% Residential/Care Home 7% Day activities 6% Personal assistant 6% Unpaid Carer—only 3 were not also Care Workers 5% Extra Care 5% Local authority 2% Young Carer 2% Volunteer in Care Sector Less than 1%: Shared Lives, Social Worker, Chef, HR, Care Recipient	Under 12 months: 4.35% 1-3 Years: 28.26% 3-5 Years: 10.87% Over 5 Years: 53.62%	77% Female 21% Male 2% Other	16-25 8% 26-35 19% 36-45 25% 46-55 22% 56-64 22% 65+ 4%

Review of previous lived experience consultation done by the Council to understand workforce issues

In September 2024, we reviewed previous Council consultation with people with lived experience to understand workforce issues from their perspective. They said that:

- Staff turnover is a significant issue – there is a need for consistent care from carers they know and who understand them.
- There was an emotional toll on carers.
- There were communication issues, including that there needs to be better communication between care providers, social workers and families, especially when looking at medication changes and medication management.
- There were care coordination issues, due to inconsistent documentation, or technology challenges meaning that it was difficult to access electronic records, complicating care coordination
- There were still impacts from covid.

