

# The Care Workforce Pathway Implementation

Creating amazing career journeys together

Midlands Knowledge Exchange | July 2025 | Claire Smout and Vicky Coe



# What is the context of the Care Workforce Pathway?

# Setting the scene



“The care workforce pathway is the first ever universal career structure for adult social care and its rollout is a huge milestone for the sector.”

Stephen Kinnock, Minister of State for Care

# The case for change



**Rising demand:** An aging population and increasing prevalence of complex conditions has significantly increased the demand for adult social care.



**High turnover and low retention:** Factors contributing to this include low pay, limited career progression and lack of recognition for the complexity and value of care work.



**Workforce shortages:** There are tens of thousands of social care vacancies at any given time, making it difficult to maintain consistent staffing levels.



**Lack of structure:** Job roles and expectations vary across providers and many lack clear progression routes.

# Supporting national strategy

## Being Fit for the Future

The Care Workforce Pathway aims to support the reduction in pressure on hospitals, by enabling timely discharges and preventing unnecessary admissions through better-trained care staff in the community.

It helps to ensure that care workers are equipped to take on delegated healthcare tasks safely and competently.

The pathway fosters partnerships between health and social care, ensuring people receive joined-up support from well-trained professionals across both sectors.



## The Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care in England (Attract and Retain, Train, Transform)

### Recognition and Reward

Defines roles and responsibilities clearly, helping to professionalise the workforce and support fairer pay structures.

### Training and Support

Outlines the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required at each level, guiding targeted training and development.

### Career Pathways

Provides a structured framework from entry-level to leadership roles, making career progression visible and achievable.

### Equality and Inclusion

Co-produced with people who draw on care and diverse stakeholders, embedding inclusive values and practices.

### Workforce Planning

Offers a national framework that supports data-driven planning and succession strategies.

### Workforce Expansion

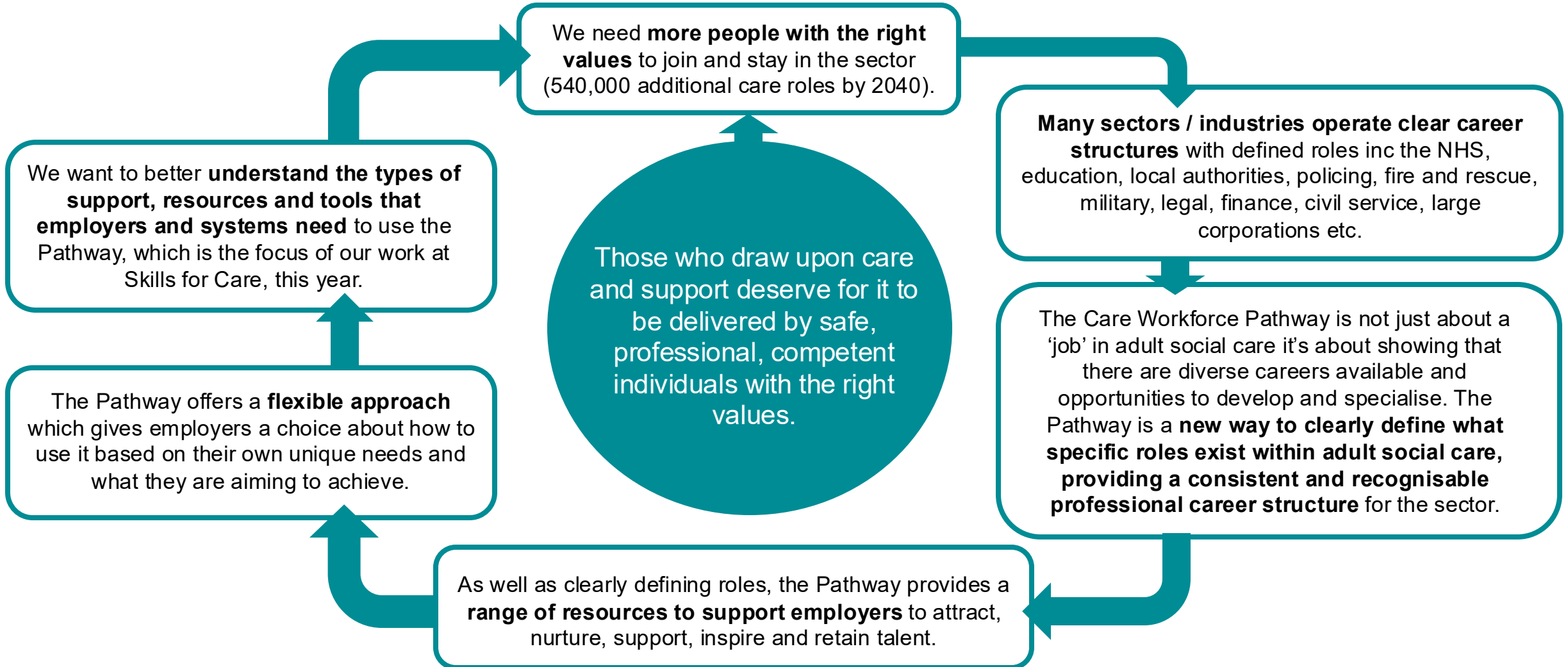
Supports formalising and defining existing roles, and can also support role expansion (e.g., enhanced care workers, practice leaders) that reflect evolving care needs.

### Integration and Innovation

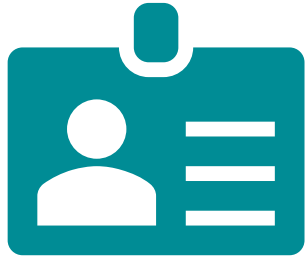
Supports delegated healthcare tasks and digital skills development, aligning with NHS integration goals.

# What is the Care Workforce Pathway?

# The Pathway explained



# Clarity of terms



## The Care Workforce Pathway / the Pathway

The **specific roles** and their behaviours, knowledge, skills and values, which are all published on the GOV.UK website, and together create a flexible, non-mandatory clearly defined universal career structure for Adult Social Care.



## Care Workforce Pathway Adoption / Implementation

The **process** of an employer choosing to adopt/implement the Pathway, determining the right level of adoption for their organisation, and then using the resources which have been created to support them to introduce it.



## Care Workforce Pathway Adoption / Implementation Pilot Activity

During 2025/26, we are asking employers and 'ecosystems' to register with us, to help pilot the existing adoption/implementation resources and suggested adoption / implementation approaches, so that we can refine and improve them further and create new products if needed.

# The Pathway



# 1. Clearly defined role categories



## New to Care

Would normally have been in their first care role for up to 12 months.



## Care or Support Worker

Established in their role, they have consolidated their skills and experience.



## Enhanced Care Worker

Delegated healthcare activities by regulated professionals and/or provides specialist condition specific support



## Personal Assistant

Supports an individual to live more independently, usually in their own home.



## Supervisor or Leader

Might be a team leader with some staff management responsibilities.



## Practice Leader

Practises a care specialism and helps others develop theirs but does not have line management responsibilities



## Deputy Manager

Has staff management responsibilities and helps to run the service.



## Registered Manager

Focuses on regulatory and legal requirements and runs the service.

# 2. Role specific knowledge, skills & behaviours



## What people do in their work

This section outlines the kind of responsibilities someone within this role category is likely to undertake as part of their role.

This role category supports people who draw on care and support to be able to live their lives. This may involve:

- aspects of personal care
- support with everyday life
- supporting them to live independently

This role category could be across a variety of settings, delivering care and support:

- in people's own homes
- in a residential setting
- through supported independent living

This role category is a starting point for a career in social care, designed for individuals with no experience in the sector.

Since new and experienced care workers have different levels of knowledge and skills, this role category focuses on building a foundational level of competence to ensure safe practice.

It also provides opportunities to develop skills and knowledge, with the potential for career progression if that is what you want to do.

## Knowledge and skills people should have

Knowledge refers to the understanding that helps someone carry out the responsibilities of the role.

Skills are the ability to apply that knowledge in practice.

This section outlines what people in this role category are expected to know and be able to do in their job.

## Minimum knowledge and skills in this role category

These are the minimum knowledge and skills that make you safe to practise. See the 'Knowledge and skills breakdown for this role category' section below for more detail.

## Progression

You should progress to consolidation of minimum skills and additional Care Certificate learning. Then progress to additional skills that are useful across all settings.

See the 'Knowledge and skills breakdown for this role category' section below for more detail.

## Diversity of practice

As part of this role category, you may also need to complete setting-specific training, such as completing dementia training when working in a dementia care setting.

We expect organisations to define their own setting-specific training based on the needs of the people drawing on care and support. Some recommendations for learning can be found in the section on 'Specific areas of practice (can do) and suggested learning opportunities' below.

# 3. Co-produced universal role values



Kind, compassionate and empathetic



See the whole person



Honest, trustworthy and reliable



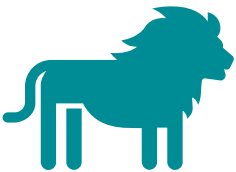
Flexible, open and learning



Respect



Proud and positive



Courageous and principled

# 4. Example role personas



## Sam

Sam has been in her care and support worker role for 7 years. At the start of her career, she first completed the Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship before going on to complete the Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care.

Sam was keen to build her skills and knowledge and has enjoyed consolidating her learning and applying her skills and knowledge in practice. Sam feels very confident in her role, having supported lots of different people with varying individual needs, and knows she can draw on this experience to guide her through her work.

Sam has always had regular catch ups with her manager and at various points they have discussed what next steps Sam might want to take in her career. Over the course of these conversations Sam has identified that she does not want to progress beyond her current role. She does not want to supervise or manage people or develop specialist skills in a specific area, but she is passionate about continuing to learn and grow.

She really enjoys her work and does not want to lose focus on the fulfilment she gets from providing day-to-day, high-quality, person-centred care and support and is keen to keep learning to ensure this is the best it can be. Sam's manager also recognises that Sam not being motivated to move up does not mean she is not motivated to grow in the role she is in.

They regularly discuss and arrange for Sam to undertake new learning and development as part of her continuous professional development plan. This has included undertaking training in line with the statutory and mandatory requirements to ensure her knowledge and skills are refreshed as well as training in areas of interest and value - for example, culturally appropriate care or to support advancements in sector or organisational need such as new technologies.



## Richard - homecare

Richard is an experienced care worker who has recently joined a homecare service which employs their own registered nurse to support in the delivery of complex care packages. Richard has completed his Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care, and other accredited and non-accredited learning with a previous employer, including training to undertake clinical tasks.

After completing a robust induction, Richard undertakes training with the service nurse on a range of delegated healthcare activities, despite having received training previously from a different regulated healthcare professional. Richard is happy to redo the training as he understands that high-quality, person-centred care should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the people he supports. This is outlined on the Skills for Care [delegated healthcare activities](#) page.

Richard enjoys being out in his local community, building meaningful relationships and providing compassionate care to the people he is supporting. He also builds a strong relationship with the service nurse and feels confident to contact her with any concerns or to seek advice whenever he needs to.

A new individual requiring care and support joins the service. He needs support with diabetes management and Richard and his manager discuss whether he would feel confident to offer this support with the right training.

Following the discussion, Richard undertakes bespoke training around diabetes management which his service has co-developed. It covers things such as the causes of diabetes, its symptoms and how it affects the body.

The training equips him with the skills needed to support the individual with their diabetes. He undergoes a robust competency assessment at the end, which the service registered nurse is confident to sign off on. Richard goes on to support the new individual with all aspects of their care. He regularly checks in with the nurse initially as he works to embed his new skills and build confidence and then



## Anton

Anton has been working in adult social care for the last 5 years and has recently become a deputy manager in a large homecare provider. While in his organisation, Anton's job title is senior care co-ordinator.

He carries out the duties associated with a deputy manager. He has previously completed the Level 2 Care Certificate qualification and the Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care which he achieved when he was a care worker.

In his role, Anton has the responsibility of managing the care co-ordinators and, through them, the wider care worker staff team. He also works very closely with the registered manager, supporting them and the wider setting to deliver effective, person-centred care to over 300 people each week.

As he settles into his role as senior care co-ordinator, Anton recognises that there were several areas around leadership and management knowledge and skills that he needs to develop and build upon to fulfil the expectations of his role. This development will complement his previous care experience and qualifications.

He has an initial supervision with his registered manager who directs him to the manager induction standards. They go through the standards together, compiling a development plan about how Anton will work towards developing the knowledge to meet each standard and set a target for him achieving this in 6 months.

Anton's progress will be regularly reviewed in his monthly supervision meetings. His manager will support him in any areas that he might be struggling with.

In addition to the development of this knowledge, Anton also works on developing other knowledge and skills that he needs in his role as a senior care co-ordinator. He works with his registered manager to identify areas of development. He then uses various formal and informal learning options to help advance his knowledge and skills.

# 5. Role specific learning opportunities

## Specific areas of practice (can do) and suggested learning opportunities

This section outlines the opportunities available within this role category to specialise in one or more areas as well as the opportunities to develop within this role category or to progress into another role.

These are the things people could be doing in their job. This could be through suggested continued professional development outlined in this section.

### Dementia

[Dementia Training Standards Framework](#)

Suggested learning programmes:

- Awareness of Dementia Level 3
- Dementia - Tier 2 training
- positive behaviour support awareness training



## Suggested learning opportunities



Qualifications:

- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Adult Care
- Level 5 Award in Understanding Digital Leadership in Adult Social Care
- Registered managers can also look to continue their development moving their practice to a Level 6 or Level 7 standard (optional).

Learning programmes:

- Lead to Succeed
- Well Led

eLearning:

- Introductory Modules for Managers
- Being prepared for CQC inspection
- Improving your CQC rating
- Delivering outstanding care
- Leading Change Improving Care

# 6. Focused tools and resources



## Career Plans

Recording what we want, when we want it, how we can reach it, and what we (with support from others) need to do to get it.

## Progression

Completing specific training and perhaps working towards a qualification to help us to move into a more senior role, if that's what we want to do.

## Skills Assessments

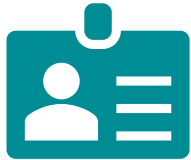
Supporting the best conversations about what matters to us and what we want from our jobs and careers, and our own skills, knowledge and behaviours.

## Learning Opportunities

Accessing consistent learning opportunities and resources that we need for the role we're in or the role we want, and to remain up to date as the world around us changes.

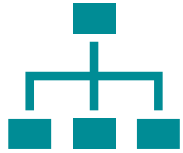
# What are the benefits of the Pathway?

# The anticipated benefits of Pathway adoption



Staff	Employers	Commissioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved motivation, capability and confidence.</li> <li>• Improved sense of feeling valued.</li> <li>• Improved perception of being viewed as a respected and skilled professional.</li> <li>• Improved sense of career ownership and self-directed learning and development.</li> <li>• Improved ability to transition into clinical roles.</li> <li>• Improved knowledge of opportunities to move and progress within the sector.</li> <li>• Improved ease of ability to move effectively throughout the sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved supervision and support.</li> <li>• Improved recruitment.</li> <li>• Improved morale and retention.</li> <li>• Strengthening of positive workplace culture.</li> <li>• Reduced recruitment costs.</li> <li>• Reduced duplication and waste in workforce development spending.</li> <li>• Improved succession planning.</li> <li>• Improved competency.</li> <li>• Improved compliance.</li> <li>• Improved care outcomes.</li> <li>• Evidence of workforce planning approaches and impact that can be showcased to CQC.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forecasting of workforce needs</li> <li>• identification of gaps in workforce capability</li> <li>• consistency and clarity in language and role values</li> <li>• ability to compare workforce development against a national criteria</li> <li>• embedding pathway-aligned competencies and training and development expectations into contracts and service level agreements</li> <li>• collaboration between commissioners and social care providers</li> <li>• ability to meet demand (and the evolving complexities of demand)</li> </ul>

# The anticipated benefits of Pathway adoption



## Our sector

- Positive changes in the right individuals entering and staying within the sector.
- Improved diversity of talent and experience throughout the sector.
- Improved capacity within the sector to meet existing and future demand.
- Strengthening of the sector through unity.
- Improving the sector's ability to influence national policy and system changes.

## Those drawing upon care and support

- Improved quality, consistency and experience of those drawing upon care and support.
- Improved representation i.e. those drawing upon care and support see themselves in the professionals who care for them.
- Improved safety, safeguarding and wellbeing.

## Our communities

- Improved public recognition of, support for, and trust in the sector as a respected and skilled professional industry.
- A society that understands and values the care workforce.
- Reduced barriers to achieving a rewarding career in adult social care.

# What the Pathway can do



	Create Clarity	Formalise Talent Management
<b>Challenge being experienced</b>	Staff feel unclear about career progression and undervalued in their roles.	Inconsistent performance management and limited visibility of internal talent.
<b>What the Pathway can offer</b>	Creates a universal framework for job expectations and development.	Provides clearly articulated knowledge, skills, behaviours and values for each of the published roles.
<b>Action taken using the Pathway</b>	Staff were engaged about what the Pathway is aiming to change, job descriptions were updated, and supervision approaches were adapted to include career conversations.	Employer used the Pathway to map and assess skills, knowledge, and behaviours across key roles, and used resources such as skills assessments and career plans to identify and understand their talent. The outcomes were used to inform learning and development, talent management and supervision approaches.
<b>Impact experienced</b>	Staff reported feeling more recognised and motivated, managers gained a clearer structure for performance conversations and development planning, and turnover reduced.	Helped identify high-potential staff, streamline training investments, and improve retention in leadership role

**What are the next steps for the Pathway?**

# CWP Pathway Adoption Pilot Projects



Early Adopters	90 New Pathway Pioneers		Eco-System
	Small & Medium Employers	Large Employers	
<p>We will work with our 30 previously recruited employers as Early Adopters to create a collaborative space to discuss challenges and solutions related to adoption of the pathway. We will facilitate network meetings, a forum for sharing knowledge, best practice, updates on reform, and support implementation across the sector.</p> <p>Early Adopter Employers will have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend planned webinars and workshops</li> <li>• Access drop-in sessions and where appropriate, one-to-ones</li> <li>• Become involved in a community of Care Workforce Pathway Implementation Champions</li> <li>• Active participation with the project evaluation</li> </ul>	<p>We will recruit new small and medium employers to help test the existing Care Workforce Pathway adoption and implementation resources. We will also trial a new approach to implementation support.</p> <p>Each employer will have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>trial</b> the effectiveness of the current Pathway resources and guidance and <b>shape</b> future versions</li> <li>• receive <b>tailored support</b> via group-based information and support sessions</li> <li>• <b>access</b> peer learning and networking events</li> <li>• <b>showcase</b> their organisations progress through articles and case studies</li> </ul>	<p>We will recruit a minimum of 3 new large employers (+250 workforce) to help test the existing Care Workforce Pathway adoption and implementation resources and trial a new approach to implementation support by providing custom-made 1:1 support.</p> <p>Each employer will have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trial the effectiveness of the current Pathway resources and guidance and shape future versions</li> <li>• receive tailored support via 1:1 support</li> <li>• access peer learning and networking opportunities</li> <li>• showcase their organisations progress through articles and case studies, and wider large employer networks where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>We will recruit 3 <b>'eco-systems'</b> of interconnected groups of organisations, to help test the existing Care Workforce Pathway adoption/implementation resources and adoption / implementation approaches.</p> <p>Each eco-system will help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>trial</b> the effectiveness of the current Pathway resources and guidance</li> <li>• <b>assess</b> and improve engagement and recruitment methods to drive sustained participation across local systems</li> <li>• <b>generate</b> evidence of the system-level benefits of using the Pathway and</li> <li>• <b>capture</b> insights and learning to shape national recommendations and support future policy and funding alignment.</li> </ul>
Lead: Rebecca Bool	Lead: Hayley Lightfoot	Lead: Nicola Clarke	Lead: Vicky Coe

**What does adoption for an employer involve in practical terms?**

# How to approach adoption

## 1. Access our support and learn from others

Join our [Care Workforce Pathway support programme](#).  
Joining the programme provides an opportunity to receive support to adopt the pathway, and to join a peer support network.

## 2. Choose the activities within the pathway's steps that are right for the organisation

Based on what workforce challenges or opportunities you have, and what your organisation is trying to achieve, choose activities from the pathway's 3 key areas, that best suit your needs.

## 3. Use our guidance and resources

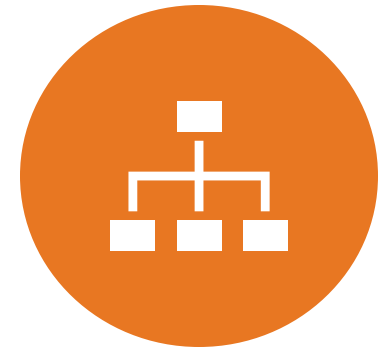
Use our [guidance](#) and range of resources to support you to adopt the pathway using an Explore, Prepare, Plan, Adopt and Understand step by step approach. The feedback and experiences of those who join, will help us to refine and further develop the pathway's resources.



Paperwork and People  
(Light)



Processes  
(Medium)



Systems and Structures  
(Full)

# Want to get involved?

If an employer is interested in being one of the New 90 Employer Pathway Pioneers, they can register an expression of interest via our website [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Pioneer](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Pioneer)

Once registered, our Care Workforce Pathway Implementation Team will get in touch to discuss how to get started.

If you have any specific questions, please email us at [cwp@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:cwp@skillsforcare.org.uk).

## Pioneers will have the opportunity to:

- **trial** the effectiveness of the current Pathway resources and guidance and **shape** future versions
- receive **tailored support** via group-based information and support sessions (1:1 for nationals)
- **access** peer learning and networking events
- **showcase** their organisations progress through articles and case studies

