

The logo for 'care roadshows' features a stylized green leaf-like shape with a yellow-orange sphere above it, followed by the word 'care' in green and 'roadshows' in white.

care roadshows



Scotland | North West | Midlands

2026 Insight Pack

Contents

Content Summary

This insight pack brings together the most valuable **leadership insights from the first Care Roadshows of 2026**, Scotland, North West and Midlands, capturing the conversations that resonated most with care owners, directors and senior leadership teams.

Rather than summarising individual sessions, this edition identifies the **recurring themes emerging across multiple expert panels and keynote discussions**. From workforce strategy and organisational culture to innovation, collaboration and quality improvement, the insights reflect the challenges and opportunities currently shaping adult social care.

Designed to encourage reflection and strategic thinking, the pack provides concise, actionable takeaways that leaders can begin considering within their own organisations - while offering a preview of the deeper discussions taking place throughout the Care Roadshow series.

To gain a deeper look into these insights, we encourage care home leaders to **join us at the upcoming Care Roadshows in Surrey, Leeds or Cardiff**.

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High-performing providers are redesigning systems, not asking staff to work harder

One of the strongest themes across the Roadshows was that **sustainable improvement rarely comes from asking teams to simply "do more"**. Instead, leading providers are redesigning everyday processes so that good practice becomes the easiest option.

Examples ranged from improving medication review pathways and simplifying communication with external professionals, through to redesigning induction programmes and removing unnecessary administrative tasks. Even relatively small operational changes were shown to have a significant impact on staff confidence, consistency and resident outcomes.



Leadership Takeaway

Rather than asking "How do we improve performance?", many organisations are now asking, **"What in our system makes good performance harder than it needs to be?"**

Retention starts long before Day One

Recruitment challenges remain, but speakers consistently argued that **retention begins before someone accepts the role.**

Several providers shared how setting realistic expectations during recruitment, creating meaningful induction experiences and providing structured support throughout the first few months dramatically reduced early turnover. Many leaders noted that organisations often lose people because they weren't the right fit to begin with - not because they failed later.

The conversation also shifted away from simply filling vacancies towards **building careers that people actively want to stay in.**



Leadership Takeaway

The most successful providers aren't recruiting faster - they're becoming better at **helping the right people join and stay.**

The strongest cultures are built on psychological safety

Across multiple sessions, one phrase kept appearing in different forms: **people need to feel safe enough to challenge existing practice.**

Whether discussing medication reviews, innovation, quality improvement or leadership, speakers highlighted that lasting **improvement happens when frontline teams feel confident questioning routines**, testing new ideas and sharing concerns without fear of blame.

Organisations creating this type of culture were far more likely to identify opportunities for improvement before problems escalated.



Leadership Takeaway

Innovation isn't created by having all the answers - it starts with leaders creating **an environment where people feel comfortable asking better questions.**

Relationships between health and social care remain one of the biggest opportunities

Several discussions highlighted that many of the **barriers facing providers are not clinical, they're relational.**

Examples showed how collaborative working between care providers, GPs, NHS teams and regulators led to quicker decisions, better medication reviews and improved outcomes for residents. Equally, speakers shared situations where **poor communication and organisational silos delayed care unnecessarily.**

The message wasn't simply about partnership, it was about changing the way conversations happen.



Leadership Takeaway

Successful providers aren't waiting for integration to happen nationally, they're **building trusted relationships locally.**

Technology should create more time for care, not replace it

AI and digital tools appeared repeatedly throughout the events, but the conversation was notably more mature than simply asking whether organisations should adopt technology.

Leaders discussed using AI to **reduce administrative burden, support audits, improve documentation** and free managers to spend more time with residents and staff. The emphasis remained firmly on **using technology to enhance human care rather than replace it**.

Several providers also stressed that innovation doesn't always require significant investment, many of the most effective ideas were simple, practical and immediately implementable.



Leadership Takeaway

The biggest return from technology isn't efficiency alone, it's **giving teams more time to focus on people**.

Person-centred care begins with understanding the individual, not the diagnosis

Dementia specialists challenged providers to **think beyond traditional environmental adaptations** and instead focus on creating genuinely meaningful experiences.

Discussions explored how behaviour is often a response to unmet need rather than something to manage, while speakers encouraged leaders to **consider the emotional, social and sensory environments** they create, not just the physical one.

The most successful services weren't defined by specialist equipment or design features, but by cultures that prioritised curiosity, dignity and meaningful relationships.



Leadership Takeaway

Outstanding dementia care is shaped less by the building itself and more by the culture created within it.

Great leadership means making the frontline feel like the centre of the organisation

One recurring message from experienced operators was that **organisational structure matters**.

Rather than viewing head office as directing operations, several leaders described reshaping their organisations so central teams exist primarily to support frontline services. Others spoke about **empowering staff to influence decisions**, strengthening leadership at every level and **investing heavily in learning and development**.

The common thread was clear: organisations grow more successfully when leadership enables others rather than controls them.



Leadership Takeaway

The best leaders don't position themselves at the top of the organisation, they **position themselves behind the people delivering care**.

Regulation is moving towards partnership and improvement

Regulatory discussions reflected a wider shift in thinking. Rather than focusing solely on compliance, there was **increasing emphasis on collaboration, transparency, early intervention and continuous improvement**.

Providers were encouraged to engage proactively with regulators, contribute to consultations and use regulatory frameworks as improvement tools rather than inspection checklists.

The broader message was that quality isn't something demonstrated on inspection day, **it's built into everyday practice**.



Leadership Takeaway

The highest-performing organisations prepare for inspection by **embedding continuous improvement every day**, not by preparing when inspection becomes imminent.

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care roadshows

South

Surrey

Epsom Downs

13 October

Yorkshire

Leeds

Elland Road

3 November

Wales

Cardiff

Cardiff City

10 November

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