A report by the House of Commons communities and local government select committee published in 2017 warned that nearly half of care staff in adult social care in England leave their jobs within one year of starting.

The four-month inquiry also raised concerns about lack of training, with more than one quarter of care workers stating they had received no dementia training.

A National Audit Office report published in February states that the government is not doing enough to support the development of a sustainable social care workforce.

It warned that the widespread public perception that care work offers ‘limited opportunities for career progression’ is a barrier to recruitment.

Sherry Creighton, a clinical care supervisor (CCS) in a care home, wants to change this perception of adult social care by encouraging care workers to step out of their comfort zone.

‘My daughter went to work as a carer at a dementia residential home and asked me to work there too. That was more than a decade ago. I had an interview and have been working in the sector ever since,’ she says.

She was promoted to senior healthcare assistant at Moreton Hill Care Centre, a residential home in Stroud, Gloucestershire. She started NVQ training at levels two and three, and her manager asked if she would become a moving and handling trainer.

Out of the comfort zone

‘It is usually a nurse who does the training, but the nurse who was going to do it left the home and I knew it would be a good role for me,’ she says.

‘I went on a six-week course at a local college and returned to the home, training the carers and nurses on moving and handling updates.

‘It was difficult. I was out of my comfort zone and the nurses had more experience than me, but they were receptive and, once I had got over the fear, I felt my confidence had been boosted.

‘I did a further course, which enabled me to teach at a more intensive level.’

Ms Creighton moved jobs to The Hollies care home in Dursley, Gloucestershire, five years ago. Residents
at The Hollies have a wide range of health and mobility conditions and there are also non-residents who stay for respite care.

Two and a half years ago Ms Creighton became one of six CCSs at The Hollies.

The CCS role was created at The Hollies to provide leadership to healthcare assistants and enhance nurse and care worker communication.

Ms Creighton says: 'I have a bit more responsibility for staff. For example, we have a morning handover from night staff and if there has been a problem overnight with staff and I can resolve the issue, I will.

'If there is a serious problem, I report it to the nurse. I am also the nurse's first port of call.

'We try to have a monthly meeting of the CCSs so we can raise standards, put together new ideas and motivate staff.'

**Enhancing communication**

Ms Creighton has become more involved with end of life care at The Hollies since taking an Open University course on death and dying.

She has also taken courses to improve her knowledge about communication, talking with relatives and advance care planning, and she has shared that learning with care staff.

‘When residents feel unwell they will sometimes tell care staff rather than nurses, so we have given them training on communication and the wording they need to use around end of life issues,’ she says.

Ms Creighton’s mother has Alzheimer’s disease

‘I had an extra two weeks with my father and I knew he would get the best care’

and her father, who had dementia, spent the last two weeks of his life in the home where she works.

‘I had an extra two weeks with my father and I knew he would get the best care,’ she says.

‘My family situation has allowed me to empathise even more with residents and relatives. You can use your experiences to help your care.

‘The residents are like friends and I need to know I’ve done my best for them.’

Ms Creighton sympathises with care staff who do not receive their employer’s support in career development that she has received.

She wants to develop her career further and encourages staff to take up opportunities on offer.

‘I am thinking of doing an assistant practitioner’s course. When we have interviews or induction days, I always say to care staff that the home will promote them in what they want to do.

‘I was pushed to do more and it has boosted my self-esteem.’

**Fast facts**

48% of care workers leave their jobs within a year of starting

27% of care workers receive no dementia training

36% The turnover rate for nurses working in social care

(Source: House of Commons communities and local government select committee)

Read the National Audit Office report on the adult social care workforce in England at tinyurl.com/nao-adult-social-care