

# Introduction to Single Handed Care (SHC)

Traditionally, social care providers mandate a two-person policy for Moving and Handling activities. However, this approach has sparked debate regarding its effectiveness and care quality. Single-Handed Care (SHC) offers a tailored, person-centred solution that addresses individual needs, potentially enhancing the quality of care while optimising resources. SHC is recognised as a practice, that emphasises a holistic, safe, and proportionate care approach when supported by adequate training and risk assessments. This method aims to deliver care that not only meets individual's needs but is also financially and operationally efficient for care providers.

## Benefits of SHC

SHC prioritises the well-being of residents, promoting independence, dignity, and social connection. By ensuring the required number of caregivers are involved, residents experience less invasiveness in their care routines and are more likely to build meaningful relationships with their care teams.

For service providers, SHC can significantly increase efficiency. Estimates suggest that SHC can be applied to 40-80% of care situations, potentially allowing facilities to increase resident admissions and optimise staffing. Furthermore, care homes that adopt SHC can transition into hubs for rehabilitation, enhancing their ability to manage individual care plans effectively and reducing the need for hospitalisation.

## Practical Applications of SHC

Several real-world examples illustrate the effectiveness of SHC:

- 1. Timely Toileting:** A resident requiring urgent toilet access faced delays when two caregivers were needed. Implementing SHC with one caregiver using appropriate transfer equipment allowed for quicker responses, minimising distress.
- 2. Pain Management:** A terminally ill patient experienced significant pain during

transfers. SHC, using specialised equipment and techniques, reduced discomfort, improving the patient's quality of life and facilitating family engagement.

- 3. Promoting Independence:** A resident with fluctuating abilities benefited from an individualised care plan that was adjusted based on their needs. This approach allowed them to engage actively in their care, enhancing autonomy and dignity.

## Implementation Considerations

Successful integration of SHC requires careful planning and assessment. Key steps include forming a task group for oversight, conducting pilot studies, employing risk assessment tools, and providing extensive training for staff. The selection of appropriate equipment is crucial, and policies should reflect individualised assessments rather than blanket rules that may hinder care flexibility.

Addressing safety is paramount; evidence suggests that with proper training and risk assessments, SHC can be implemented safely, even in complex cases.



## Conclusion

Single-Handed Care represents a vital consideration for modern moving and handling practices in social care. When appropriately applied, SHC not only improves the dignity

and privacy of residents but also enhances efficiency for care providers, enabling more meaningful interactions and potential savings. As care practices evolve, the traditional two-caregiver requirement must be reassessed to align with evidence-based practices that truly prioritise the needs of individuals.

For further guidance on implementing SHC, interested parties can reach out to Deborah Harrison or Nuno Santos Lopes for additional resources and support.

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<https://www.careengland.org.uk/single-handed-care/>



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