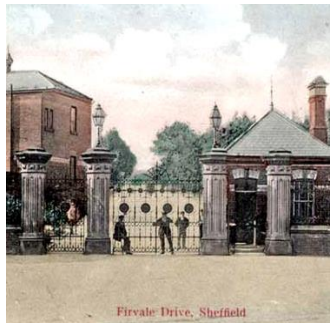


Sources for the Study of Workhouses in Sheffield



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Front Cover Illustrations - left to right:

Penny token of the Overseers of the Poor, Sheffield, 1812
(*Picture Sheffield: s09460*)

Entrance gates and Lodge, Sheffield Union Workhouse, Fir Vale, 1900
(*Picture Sheffield: y02028*)

Children at Fulwood Cottage Homes, 1910
(*Picture Sheffield: u00317*)

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Thanks to Greg Davies, MA student, University of Sheffield for carrying out the preliminary research on poor relief and workhouses in Sheffield.

You can download a copy of this *Study Guide* from www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives

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Introduction

This *Study Guide* provides references for sources located at Sheffield Archives and the Local Studies Library relating to workhouses situated in Sheffield and surrounding townships.

The aim of the guide is to provide an overview of the topic and direct the researcher towards key sources. It offers a brief context in which to place primary source material.

Sheffield Archives and the Local Studies Library hold a vast range of sources dating from the advent of the Poor Law in 1601 through to the mid-twentieth century, although the richest evidence dates from the period after the mid-1700s, by which point workhouses had become more established institutions. There is less documentary evidence relating to the region's earliest workhouses c.1601-1750. Consequently earlier documents that have endured the test of time are often isolated, lacking any contextual detail, and therefore limited in the amount of information they reveal.

Confusion over the workhouse topic can be compounded by earlier definitions of Sheffield's geographical boundaries, especially for a researcher not local to South Yorkshire; whilst it may seem an obvious point, it is helpful to understand that certain current districts of Sheffield, such as Attercliffe and Brightside were, until the nineteenth century, recognised as independent townships of the West Riding, responsible for their own poor relief administrations. This point is further complicated by the development of Sheffield into a sizeable industrial city, which grew to incorporate both the populations and in some cases, poor relief responsibilities of its immediately adjacent townships. As a result, the early nineteenth century saw several earlier workhouses either shut down and disappear from the record or be incorporated into an existing, larger institution under a completely different name.

This guide comprises two parts: the first focuses on the beginnings of poor relief within the 'ancient' parish of Sheffield from the 1600s for which evidence is comparatively limited; as the evidence becomes more abundant the second part narrows its geographical scope, documenting the centralisation of the workhouse system in Sheffield over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by concentrating on the development of the **Sheffield (Fir Vale) Institution** - now occupied by Northern General Hospital, and the **Ecclesall Bierlow Institution** - situated on the site of Nether Edge Hospital.

Timeline showing key dates:

The Origins and Development of Poor Relief and Workhouses	
1601	Act for the Relief of the Poor (known as the 'Old Poor Law') passed.
1628	First workhouse established in Sheffield at West Bar.
1761	First mention of proposed workhouse at Sharrow Moor.
1776-1777	Parliamentary report confirmed workhouses at: Sheffield, Attercliffe-cum-Darnall and Brightside Bierlow.
1770s-1780s	Growing concern in Sheffield over the conditions at the workhouse.
1804	Appeal to the public by Robert Hadfield concerning the state of Sheffield workhouse.
1829	New workhouse for Sheffield set up in a former cotton mill on Kelham Street, Sheffield to house up to 600 inmates.
1834	Poor Law Amendment Act (known as the 'New Poor Law') passed.
1837	Ecclesall Bierlow Union and Sheffield Poor Law Union established.
1842-1843	Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse built at Cherrytree Hill to replace earlier building at Sharrow Moor.
1849	The Guardians leased 50 acres of moorland from the Duke of Norfolk at Hollow Meadows
1881	Sheffield Poor Law Union adopted the existing workhouse on Kelham Street until 1881 when the new building at Fir Vale was officially opened.
1893	Scattered Homes system devised.
1903	Ecclesall Bierlow Union built a children's home at Bolehill, Fulwood called Fulwood Cottage Homes.
1906	Fir Vale Workhouse changed its name to Fir Vale Institution. Fir Vale House was established.
1914	Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse changed its name to Ecclesall Bierlow Union Institution.
1925	Ecclesall Bierlow Union and Sheffield Union were dissolved and the new Sheffield Union was created.
c. 1927	Ecclesall Bierlow Institution became known as Nether Edge Hospital.
1929	Local Government Act passed, abolishing the system of poor law unions in England and Wales and their boards of guardians, passing their powers to local authorities.
1930	Fir Vale Institution became the City General Hospital.

PART 1: THE BEGINNINGS OF POOR RELIEF IN SHEFFIELD, 1601 - 1834

What was 'the workhouse'?

Under the Poor Law system of England and Wales, a workhouse was a place where people who were unable to support themselves – namely the poor, the infirm and the sick - could go to live and work.

The 'Old' Poor Law, 1601

An *Act for the Relief of the Poor* was passed in 1601, commonly known as the 'Old Poor Law'. This established the parish as the basic unit responsible for assessing and collecting local taxes. The most enduring points of the 1601 Act established that:

- The parish be responsible for providing poor relief and that relief be funded by a calculated poor rate, raised from local householders.
- That a parish official, known as an 'overseer', be responsible for collecting the poor rate and that it be administered by the parish Vestry – a committee comprising the minister, churchwardens and a number of locally prominent householders.



Although a number of very modest establishments emerged during this period, the Old Poor Law made no mention of workhouses; instead, official poor relief

constituted handouts to people in their homes of daily necessities such as food, fuel and clothing.

Information about the Overseers of the Poor including the amounts of money they collected and how it was paid out is recorded in some civil parish records, notably: Ecclesfield (PR54), Tinsley (PR144), Todwick (PR1), Harthill (PR47), Bolton on Dearne (PR9) and various other 'older' parishes. Information is also contained in the township records of Sheffield (CA) held at Sheffield Archives.

Penny token of the Overseers of the Poor, 1812. Workhouse tokens were specially minted in the early 1800s as poor relief. They could be spent at certain shops on necessities such as bread (although not alcohol)! The shopkeeper would redeem them at the workhouse. They were declared illegal in 1817 although exception was made for the Birmingham and Sheffield workhouses. (Picture Sheffield: s09460)

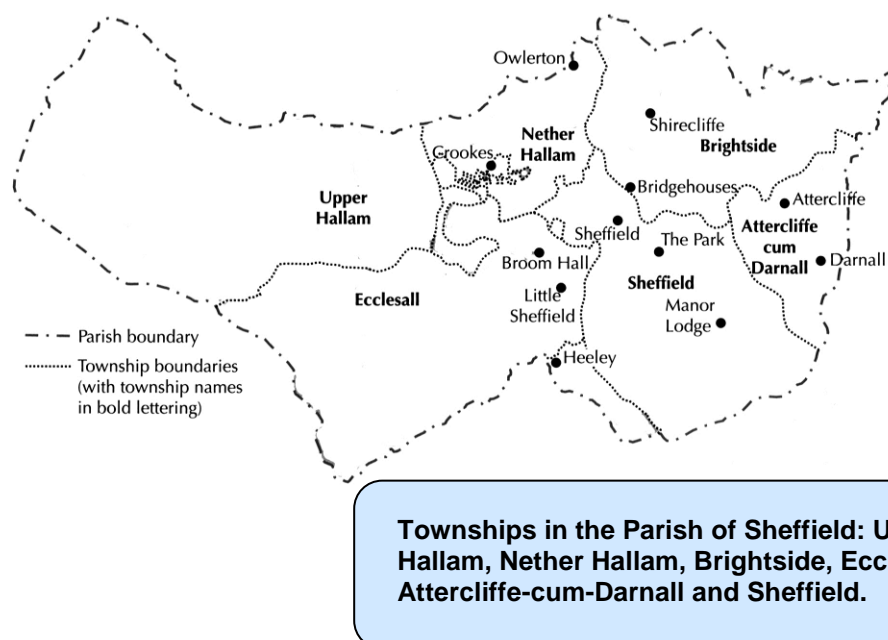
Early Workhouses

The earliest workhouses, in operation before 1700, were small establishments. Although the provision of accommodation for inmates became an increasing trend, workhouses operating before the eighteenth century tended only to be able to accommodate around ten to 20 inmates. Also, no one single institution had responsibility for a designated area; workhouses were often sporadically founded and lacked any effective governing body or coordinated form of management.

The Workhouse Test Act (also known as Knatchbull's Act) passed in 1723 incorporated the 'workhouse test' to provide a clearer framework for parishes to set up and operate a workhouse. The passing of this Act led to a boom in the opening of parish workhouses, with as many as 700 estimated to have been in operation by 1732. The *Abstract of Returns Made by the Overseers of the Poor* published by Parliament in 1776-1777 recorded over 1,800 workhouses in operation; almost one for every seven parishes in England and Wales (there were 152 in Yorkshire alone).¹

The report confirmed that a number of workhouses existed in the Sheffield area:

- **Sheffield** (with accommodation for up to 160 inmates)
- **Attercliffe-cum-Darnall** (24 inmates)
- **Brightside Bierlow** (24 inmates)

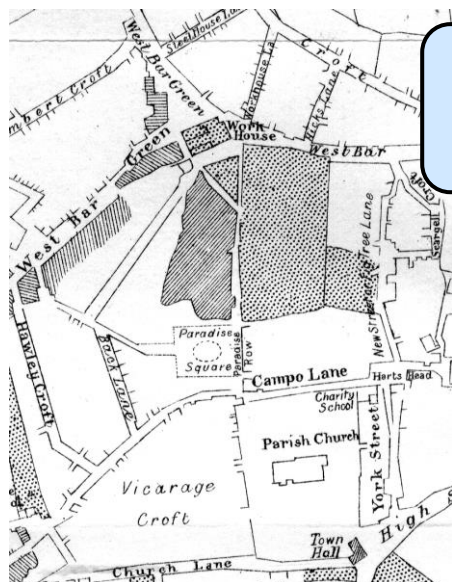


Sheffield Archives and the Local Studies Library holds a number of documents relating to these early workhouses. Examples are given overleaf.

¹ See The Workhouse website: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Sheffield/> (accessed: 13 Aug 2014)

The first Sheffield Workhouse

Sheffield's first 'workhouse' was financed in 1628 at a cost of approximately £200. It was located at Workhouse Croft (now called Paradise Street), West Bar. It opened around 1632 and Nicholas Parkin was appointed 'Master of



Map showing the Workhouse at West Bar in 1780.

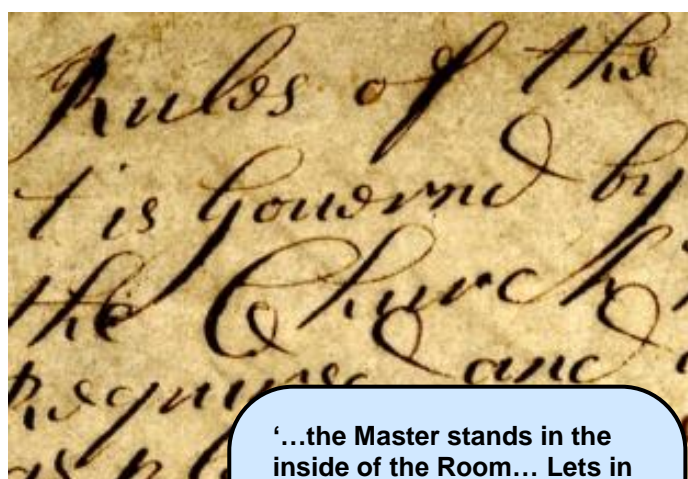
the Children'. The accounting records of the Burgery of Sheffield (later known as the Town Trustees) for 1632 and 1633

show that money was spent on purchasing cloth to make coats and smocks for 20 'poore children putte into the Workehouse' along with straw mats for beds, a cow and payment to 'one who came from Chappell [-en-le-Frith] to have taught children to knitt'. (Sheffield Archives: TT/12).

Over time the building was extended and parts that were unoccupied by the poor were rented out to private individuals. In 1722 the 'building of new Almshouses in the West barr' was recorded. It is not clear whether this building stood on the same site as the earlier workhouse, but the new institution continued to house the poor until 1829.

The development of these early workhouses is well documented in the minutes and accounts of the Town Trustees (TT) which are held at Sheffield Archives. See: J. D.

Leader, *The Records of the Burgery of Sheffield*, 1897 (Sheffield Archives: TT Print Source) and J. D. Leader, *Extracts from the Earliest Book of Accounts belonging to the Town Trustees of Sheffield 1566 to 1707*, 1879 (Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets, Vol.60, 042 SST).



'...the Master stands in the inside of the Room... Lets in the poor one at a time then... hears their Complaint if they think it proper they take them into the [work]house... if not they turn them ought [out]... lets in another poor until all is heard...' (Sheffield Archives: CA24/57)

A number of documents have survived which relate to these early Sheffield workhouses. An insight into workhouse life is given in an extract from the 'Rules for the Sheffield Workhouse', c.1750 (above right).

A pamphlet entitled *Facts and Observations relating to the state of the Workhouse* held at the Local Studies Library dating from 1789 (Local Studies: Local Pamphlets Vol. 63. No.1, 042S) notes the following:

‘...the Sheffield Workhouse is a scene of distress, of illness, and profligacy [immorality]...’

‘...the town, for want of a proper Workhouse, maintains in a state of idleness a considerable number of Women, who might and ought to be compelled to maintain themselves...’

‘... it is the unhappy lot of those unfortunate Females whose indiscretions, often occasioned by treachery and falsehood, have compelled to seek a miserable refuge in the Sheffield Workhouse.’

‘There are at present in the House about 50 *Children*, who may well be termed *The Children of the Public* – for, in general, they have not one friend in the world in the smallest degree interested in their preservation and welfare.’

‘...the Boys frequently run away from their service, and – if not enlisted as soldiers – become vagabonds and thieves.’

A workhouse menu showing the food for the week paints a similarly miserable picture:

In 1829 a new workhouse for Sheffield was set up in a former cotton mill on Kelham Street, Sheffield. It could house up to 600 inmates.

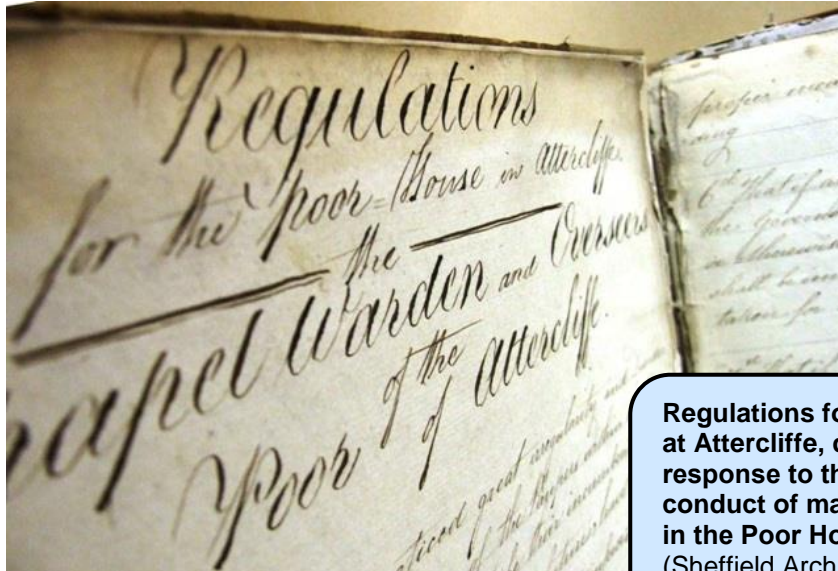


**Extract from ‘the week’s menu for the poor’, Sheffield Workhouse, c.1750.
Food included broth, ‘boyled’ pudding, bread, cheese and beans.
(Sheffield Archives: CA24/57)**

Other workhouses in the Parish of Sheffield

The Sheffield Workhouse was not the only workhouse in the area at this time. Sheffield Archives and Local Studies Library holds a number of documents relating to other early workhouses:

Attercliffe-cum-Darnall



Regulations for the Poor House at Attercliffe, drawn up in response to the 'disorder in the conduct of many of the Paupers in the Poor House', 1819 (Sheffield Archives: CA15/3)

Brightside Bierlow

The township of Brightside Bierlow had its own workhouse in Pitsmoor, at the east side of Rock Street. The building was erected in 1801 and replaced an earlier one also at Pitsmoor.

Artist's impression of the Brightside Bierlow workhouse, Rock Street, Pitsmoor, c.1920s (Local Studies: Henry Tatton, Vol.1, p.101 942.74SQ)



Nether Hallam

Records show that the township of Nether Hallam also had a workhouse. William White's *History, gazetteer and directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1833 states that it was situated at Crookes Moor; John Kinder was the governor and Henry Lowther was the vestry clerk and collector.

Account book, Nether Hallam Workhouse, detailing various expenses and draper accounts, 1795 – 1799
(Sheffield Archives: CA21/24)

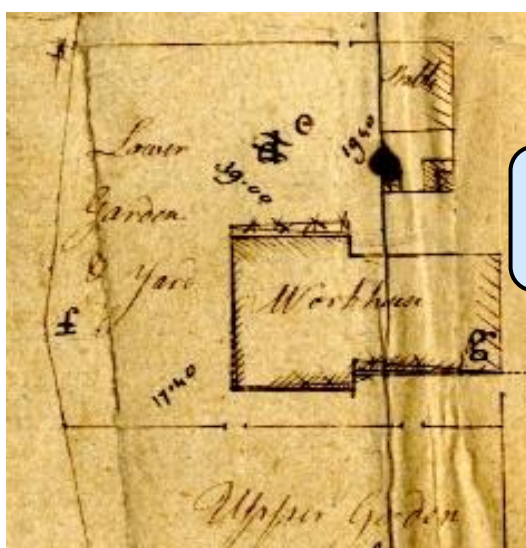


Sharrow Moor

Plans from the Fairbank Collection at Sheffield Archives show that a workhouse was also built at **Sharrow Moor**. William Fairbank was surveyor to the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord of the Manor and he notes in 1761 that 'Saml. Naw's 2 Closes and his Homestead used as a Workhouse for Ecclesall liberty at Cherry Tree hill'. In 1793 Fairbank noted ground set out by Mr Battie, the overseer for the Marquis, for the site of a workhouse on Sharrow Moor. This site was at Sharrow Mount near to the junction of Psalter Lane and Cowlishaw Road.

Once built, the old workhouse on Sharrow Moor could accommodate around 60 to 80 persons at any one time; prior to its closure it housed 15 men, 21 women, 13 boys and 14 girls.

The workhouse here was sold in 1845 to Henry Newbould of Sharrow House for £1,200.



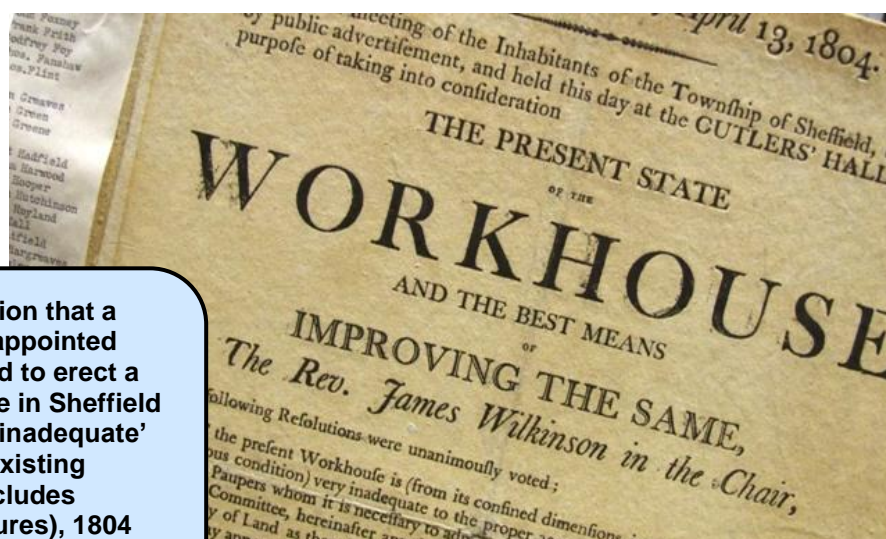
Plan of Sharrow Moor, 1769
showing proposed workhouse
(Sheffield Archives: FC SheD 624 S)

See: Joan Flett, *The Story of the Workhouse and the Hospital at Nether Edge*, 2002
(Sheffield Archives: FLE HEALTH;
Local Studies: 362.11 SQ) for more information on the workhouse at Sharrow Moor.

Emerging Problems with the Early Workhouse System

Despite the boom in workhouses, the state of the poor deteriorated dramatically towards the end of the eighteenth century.

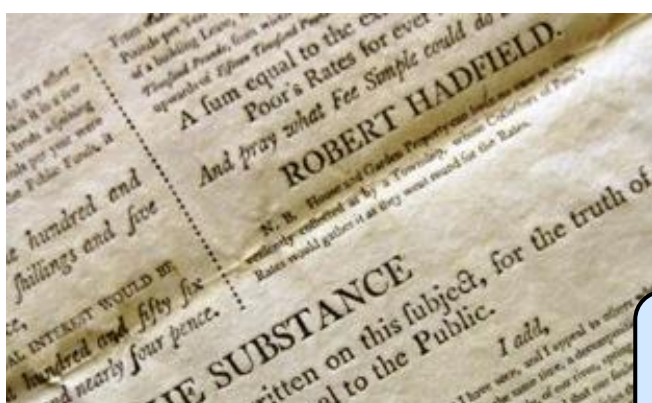
In 1797, Sir Frederic Eden published the classical economic text *The State of the Poor* which examined the living conditions of the poorer classes and the abysmal state of workhouses. He concluded that the 'Old' Poor Law of 1601 was a destructive drain on society's resources. A facsimile copy of this text is available at the Reference and Information Library, Sheffield (368.4[0942]).



Printed resolution that a committee be appointed and empowered to erect a new workhouse in Sheffield to replace the 'inadequate' and 'ruinous' existing workhouse (includes original signatures), 1804 (Sheffield Archives: MD1123)

In Sheffield, the appalling state of the workhouse was reported by a number of observers, reflecting the findings of Frederick Eden's national observations. See for example: James Wheat, *Observations on the present state of the poor of Sheffield, with proposals for their future employment and support*, 1774 (Local Studies Library 352.9S), Facts and Observations relating to the

State of the Workhouse, 1789 (Local Studies Library PAMP 63, No.1 042S) and an appeal to the public by Robert Hadfield concerning the state of Sheffield Workhouse, 1804 (Sheffield Archives MD3734/1).



Appeal to the public by Robert Hadfield concerning the state of the Sheffield Workhouse, 1804 (Sheffield Archives: MD3734/1)

Despite holding a public meeting in 1804 regarding the state of the workhouse, nothing was done to improve matters until 1829 when a new workhouse was set up on Kelham Street, Sheffield.

PART 2: THE NEW POOR LAW, 1834: POOR LAW UNIONS IN SHEFFIELD

In 1834, the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed, also known as the **New Poor Law**. It aimed to create a more centralised system for managing the administration of poor relief by grouping parishes together and appointing central bodies to administer the new system both locally and nationally.

The New Poor Law was overseen by a new administrative body called the Poor Law Commission based in London. At a local level, the law was applied by parishes which were grouped together into new administrative units called **Poor Law Unions**. A union typically contained up to 20 or 30 parishes or townships and was run by a **Board of Guardians** elected by the local rate-payers who met weekly to carry out the business of the union. They survived until 1930, when their functions were taken over by county and borough councils and later, in 1948, by central government.

The New Poor Law led to the establishment of two Poor Law Unions in Sheffield in 1837:

- **Ecclesall Bierlow Union** which was made up of the townships of Ecclesall Bierlow, Nether Hallam, Upper Hallam, Beauchief, Dore, Totley, and Norton.
- **Sheffield Poor Law Union** which was made up of the townships of Sheffield, Attercliffe-cum-Darnall and Brightside Bierlow, together with Handsworth parish.

There were neighbouring Poor Law Unions at Wortley, Penistone, Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster and Thorne.

There are some records for **Wortley Poor Law Union** which covered areas now within the City of Sheffield (including Ecclesfield, Stocksbridge and Bradfield) including: Guardians' minutes 1838-1929; committee minutes 1884-

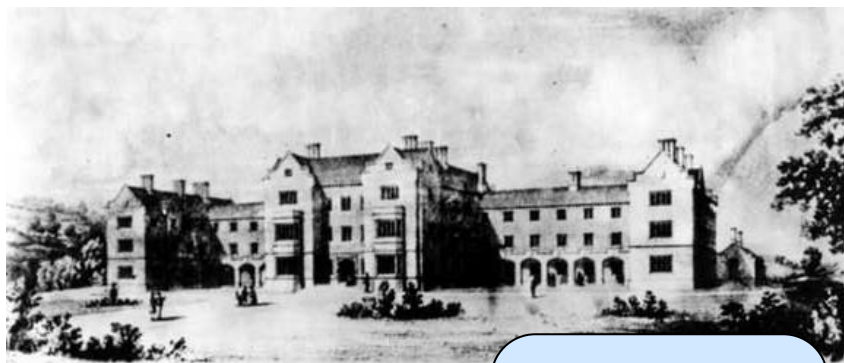


1929 (Sheffield Archives: SY 164A) and Public Assistance Committee Annual Report of the work, 1931-1939 (Local Studies: 352.9 S).

Nineteenth century image of the poor: a soup kitchen at Brightside, Sheffield
(Picture Sheffield: s03011)

Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse (later Nether Edge Hospital)

The **Ecclesall Bierlow Union** was formed in 1837 under an order of the Poor Law Commissioners. The workhouse was built 1842 -1843 at Cherrytree Hill to replace an old workhouse on Psalter Lane, Sharrow Moor. By 1895, as well as the main building, there were schools for boys and girls, an asylum (erected in 1859), a hospital with male and female wards, a smallpox hospital, and tramp wards. A maternity block, named the Victoria Diamond Jubilee Maternity Hospital was opened in 1897. Two more ward blocks were built shortly after.



Lithograph of proposed Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, Nether Edge, 1840 (Picture Sheffield: s07427)

In 1914 Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse changed its name to Ecclesall Bierlow Union Institution.

By order of the Ministry of Health in 1925 Ecclesall Bierlow Union and Sheffield Union were dissolved and the new Sheffield Union was created. From c.1927, after the building of a new maternity block, the Institution became known as Nether Edge Hospital.

ECCLESALL BIERLOW UNION WORKHOUSE.			
Date of admission.	NAME.	When Born.	RELIGION.
25.10.07	Bailey John	25.12.1847	AB
29.10.07	Bradshaw Herbert	12.2.1874	Ch of E
20.10.07	Diamond Claude	22.4.1881	"
	W. Branch		

The survival rate for records relating to both Sheffield Poor Law Unions is, unfortunately, quite poor. However, a number of important

Extract from an Admission Register, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1907. Registers details: date of admission, name, religion, occupation, etc. (Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/2/5)

registers have survived

including: **admission** (or 'creed') **registers** 1890-1931; **asylum admission registers** 1920-1928; **registers of inmates** 1904-1931; **workhouse birth registers** 1898-1929; **workhouse death registers** 1903-1931; and **officers' appointments** 1892-1925. These are supplemented by reports, with **lists of officers and accounts**, 1913, 1916-1919, 1921-1923.

Ecclesall Bierlow Union: Cottage Homes, Fulwood

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Poor Law Commissioners began to encourage unions to remove children from the perilous workhouse environment by placing them in separate buildings.



Bathroom, Fulwood Cottage Homes, 1940
(Picture Sheffield: s07787)

In 1903 the Ecclesall Bierlow Union built a children's home off Blackbrook Road, Fulwood called Fulwood Cottage Homes. The home consisted of 21 separate cottages which could accommodate over 300 children who were cared for by foster mothers and attended local schools. In 1930, the Fulwood Cottage Homes came under the care of the Public Assistance Committee of Sheffield Corporation and by 1940 were absorbed, with other residences, into the City of Sheffield Children's Homes.



Registers of Children at Fulwood Cottage Homes are at Sheffield Archives, 1905 - 1936 (Sheffield Archives: CA41/37-38)



Children at Fulwood Cottage Homes, 1910
(Picture Sheffield: u00317)

Fir Vale Workhouse (later Northern General Hospital)

Also founded in 1837, **Sheffield Poor Law Union** adopted the existing workhouse on Kelham Street which, in 1829, had been converted from a cotton mill, enabling it to house up to 600 inmates. In accordance with the New Poor Law, the Sheffield Poor Law Union began planning in 1856 for a new much larger workhouse as the Kelham Street site had become increasingly over-crowded and remained incapable of providing any form of care for the sick.

“Black beetles are a great nuisance and occasionally get into the food but vigorous steps are being taken to decimate them.”

- Professor from University of Sheffield on Fir Vale Workhouse, 1896 (Lyn Howsam, *Memories of the Workhouse at Fir Vale*, p9)

However, opposition from local ratepayers, who regarded a new workhouse as a waste of public money, meant that the proposed 44-acre site at Fir Vale was not acquired until 1874. The workhouse was officially opened in 1881.

Extract from Punishment Register, Fir Vale Institution, 1903 – 1920 (Sheffield Archives: CA510/1)

Date	Name	Age	Offence	Remarks by Master
27 Oct 1903	Michael Sweeney	-	Returned from funeral drunk	Not to go to any more funerals
11 Nov 1903	David Scholes	24	Returned from absconding over the wall this afternoon	Cautioned
21 Dec 1918	Gregory Clement	49	Returned 3:15am	Sent to mental ward



Entrance gates and Lodge, Sheffield Union Workhouse, Fir Vale, 1900
(Picture Sheffield: s00405)

The new workhouse comprised six separate departments: the main building to accommodate 1,662 paupers, plus officials; asylums to accommodate 200 patients classed as lunatic; a school for 300 pauper children; vagrants wards to take up to 60 men and 20 women; the

hospital block to cater for 366 patients; and the fever hospitals. A children's hospital for up to 60 was opened in 1894 and a 'Lock' ward for treating women with venereal diseases also existed by the 1890s.

A new three-storey hospital block was completed in 1906; the newly named Sheffield Union Hospital (later known as Fir Vale Hospital) was formally separated from the workhouse. The workhouse became known as Fir Vale Institution. Fir Vale House was the name generally used for the institution premises accommodating geriatric patients and those classed as 'mental defectives'.

Day	Bread	Milk	Tinned Bread	Beef or Pork	Potatoes or other Vegetables	Pea Soup	Bacon (Boiled)	Meat Pudding	Lentil Soup	Bread Pudding	Dry Fruit Pudding	Roley Poley
Sunday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Monday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tuesday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wednesday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Thursday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Friday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Saturday	5	1 1/2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Dietary table, Fir Vale Workhouse, 1919 (Sheffield Archives: CA510); **'Union' Cockroach Paste** (Sheffield Year Book and Record, 1917, Local Studies)

Belgian refugees were temporarily housed at Fir Vale during The First World War, and over 15,000 soldiers, including men from the Sheffield Battalion who had been wounded on the Somme, were treated in a new children's hospital which opened in 1916.

From 1930 Fir Vale Hospital and Fir Vale House ceased to be managed by the Poor Law Board of Guardians and their Hospital Committee. The hospital was transferred to the City Council and administered through the Hospitals Subcommittee of the Health Committee. The name was changed to City General Hospital (later Northern General Hospital).

The survival rate for records relating to both Sheffield Poor Law Unions is, unfortunately, quite poor. However, a number of important records *have* survived including: **Guardians' minutes** 1890-1930 and **letter books** 1847-1861; **officers' appointments** 1876-1913; **workhouse punishment book** 1903-1926, **dietary table**, 1919. These are supplemented by **copy minutes** 1891/2-1929/30; **statement of accounts**, 1884-1930 (with gaps); **Guardians handbook and list of committees**, 1894-1904, 1906-1929. Unlike Ecclesall Bierlow Union, Admission Registers have not survived. However, lists of inmates can be found on the **census**.

The minutes of the Board of Guardians' meetings describe the day-to-day running of the workhouse (right).

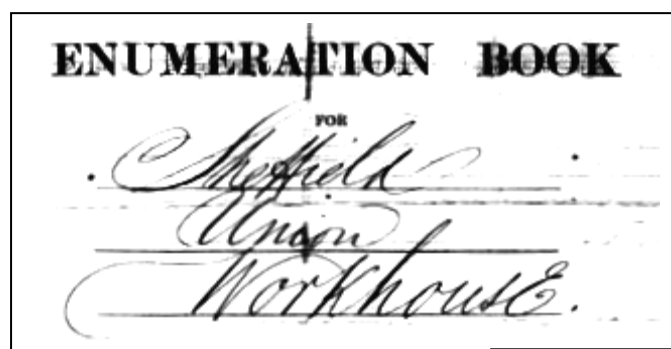


'It was asked whether a post could be found for Edith Snape as a masseur at the Workhouse. Being blind, Edith had been maintained there by the Workhouse.'

'Two inmates of the Asylum, John Arthur Parramore and James Walsh, made an application for a tobacco allowance on the grounds that they were now working. This was refused.'

Using the Census to find Pauper Ancestors

Although the records created by the Ecclesall Bierlow and Sheffield Union Workhouses are incomplete, there are other ways of finding out about



ancestors in the Sheffield workhouses. No admission registers for Fir Vale Institution have survived at all. However, the census, carried out every ten years, lists the names of inmates, staff and visitors in the workhouse.

Extracts from the 1861 census for Sheffield Union Workhouse (RG9, 3486, Folio 123)

NAME and SURNAMES or Initials of Inmates	(1) RELATION to Head of Family—or (2) Position in the Institution
Ann Fashin	Inmate
M. A. Kelly	"
Lucy Bramall	"
Edith Jacques	"
Eliza Crowley	"

The census gives: names; whether inmate, staff or visitor; condition (i.e. married, unmarried, widow or widower); age; occupation; place of birth; and whether deaf, dumb or blind. The Sheffield census (1841 – 1901) is available on microfilm at Sheffield Archives and Local Studies Library or on www.ancestry.com which is free to view at any library in Sheffield. The 1911 census is available to view via subscription at: www.findmypast.co.uk

The names of all inmates and staff at the Kelham Street Workhouse and the Fir Vale Institution from the 1881 Sheffield census have been transcribed and made accessible online at: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk>

Selected names of inmates, 1881 census, Sheffield Union Workhouse

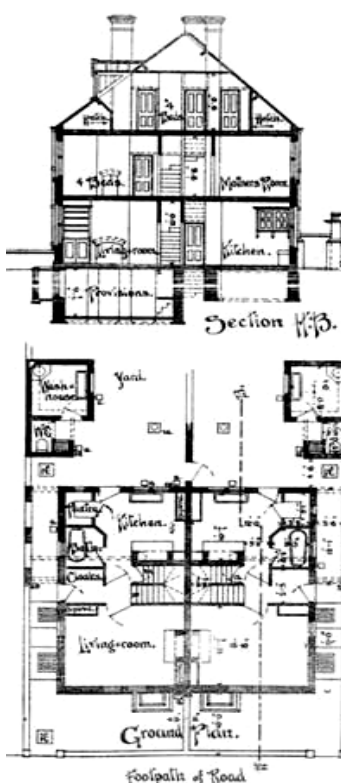
Name	Mar.	Age	Sex	Occupation	Disability	Birthplace
Walter Abby	U	20	M	Wire backer	Lunatic	Sheffield
Reuben Darling	M	71	M	Scavenger		Sheffield
Henry Marsden	U	33	M	None	Idiot	Coventry, Warwick
Henry T. Martern	W	57	M	Shoemaker		Buenos Ayres, South America
Bernard McMahon	W	65	M	Iron Moulder	Blind	Manchester, Lancs
Jane Groves	U	13	F	None	Imbecile	Sheffield

Sheffield Union: Scattered Homes

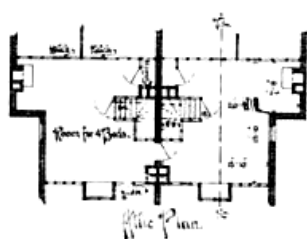
It was recognised quite early that children needed to be cared for separately from adult workhouse inmates and in 1888 the 'boarding out' of 40 young children was undertaken. The 'isolated homes' (or 'scattered homes') system was devised in 1893 by John Wycliffe Wilson and essentially represents the beginnings of foster parenting as a form of child care. Children were placed in ordinary domestic homes 'scattered' across Sheffield.



'A Typical Family', Scattered Homes children, 1890s (Picture Sheffield: y01176)



Typical plan of a 'Scattered Home', 1900 (Picture Sheffield: y01180)

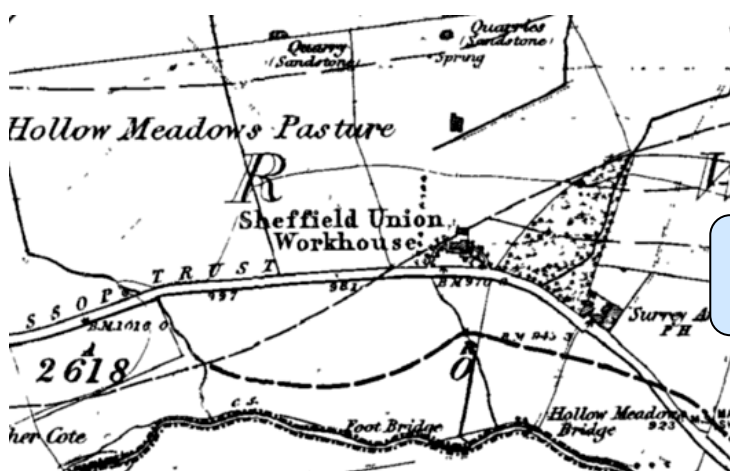


A central headquarters home was set up at Smilter Lane (now Herries Road) and included three children's homes known as Rose, Hawthorn and Ivy to house various children, sometimes with behavioural difficulties.

Sheffield Archives holds records relating to the Sheffield Union Children's Home, Herries Road, Fir Vale and the Scattered Homes including: Registers of Children, 1894 – 1939 and admission and discharge slips covering the 1940s - 1950s (CA41/33-36 and 2006/13)

'My visit [to The Scattered Homes] showed evidence of what a sympathetic system and humane instincts could accomplish – a shining contrast to the poor little tired, deserted ones who drag out a melancholy existence in the great workhouses of our land.' - *Children of the State: Sheffield's Successful Experiment*, 1898 (Local Studies: 339.1S)

Hollow Meadows Workhouse/Industrial School



In 1849 the Guardians leased 50 acres of moorland from the Duke of Norfolk at Hollow Meadows with a view of reclaiming it by pauper

Hollow Meadows Site, 1854 OS Map

labour. The land was brought under cultivation, and sub-let to farm tenants; able-

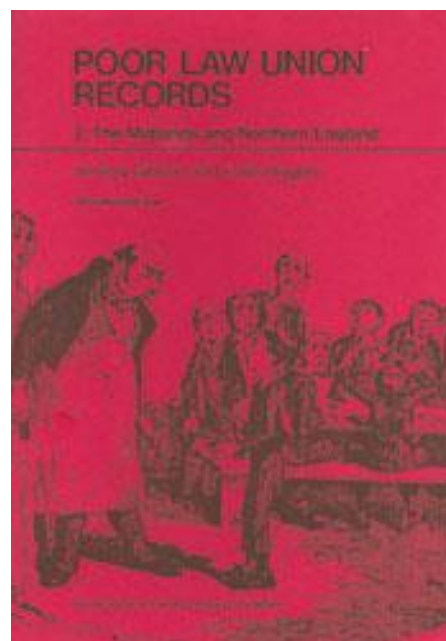
bodied men who required work were sent there. White's Directory of Sheffield, 1901 shows that it later became a 'truant school established in 1879 as a means of discipline for recalcitrant children and will hold 90 boys'.

Records of other workhouses and Poor Law Unions in the Sheffield/South Yorkshire area

The boom in new workhouses opening during the 1700s extended beyond the old parish boundaries of Sheffield. Workhouses sprang up across South Yorkshire. Various documents have survived for some of the early workhouses (and later Poor Law Unions) in the Sheffield area including: Thurgoland Workhouse, Silkstone Poor House, Ecclesfield Poor House, Tapton Hill Workhouse and Wortley Poor Law Union. More detail is given in the bibliography of sources at the back of this *Study Guide*.

To find further sources relating to workhouses in South Yorkshire, researchers are advised to consult: *Poor Law Union Records 2. The Midlands and Northern England* by Jeremy Gibson and Colin Rogers (Sheffield Archives: GIB HEALTH) which lists the records of the Unions created under the New Poor Law of 1834, until their abolition in 1930.

A useful guide to finding workhouse records in Yorkshire.



List of documents, books, photographs and other items available at Sheffield Libraries, Archives and Information

General guides to workhouses in Sheffield and Yorkshire

Drinkall, Margaret, *Sheffield Workhouse* (History, 2011)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 362.585 S; also available at *Sheffield Archives*: DRI/HEALTH)

Jeremy Gibson and Colin Rogers, *Poor Law Union Records 2: Midlands and Northern England*, Federation of Family History Societies: 1997.
(*Sheffield Archives*: GIB HEALTH)

R. J. P. Smith, 'Our Workhouse System', (five articles reprinted from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 20, 22, 24 and 26 Aug and 1 Sep 1896).
(*Local Studies*: Local Pamphlets, vol. 7, no.1, 042 SQ; *Sheffield Archives*: AC67/1-5)

A. R. Fearnley, *Our Daily Bread*, 2001.
(*Local Studies*: 362.58 S; also available at a number of community libraries)

Peter Higginbotham, *Workhouses of the North*, Tempus: 2006.
(*Sheffield Archives*: HIG/HEALTH; *Central Lending Library*: 362.585)

Newspapers

The three Sheffield newspapers of the period are available on microfilm at Sheffield Local Studies Library:

Sheffield Daily Telegraph
Sheffield Independent
Yorkshire Telegraph and Star

There are no indexes to the newspapers but other sources can be used to try to establish the dates of events. 'The year's record' in *The Sheffield Year Book* (*Local Studies Library*: 032.74 S) provides a chronological list of events taken from the newspapers.

The British Library British Newspapers 1800-1900 website includes over two million pages from over 70 national and local newspapers (including the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*) (<http://qdc.gale.com/products/19th-century-british-library-newspapers-part-i-and-part-ii>)

Archives of some national newspapers are available on the internet, notably *The Times* (<http://archive.timesonline.co.uk>) and *The Guardian* (<http://archive.guardian.co.uk>)

Oral History

Local Studies has a collection of oral history tapes, mainly recorded in the early 1980s, which include a number of people talking about their memories and experiences of the workhouses in Sheffield.

There is a subject index on cards and for most recordings there is a printed sheet with a summary of the interview.

Photographs

Picture Sheffield (www.picturesheffield.com) is an online database of photographs drawn mainly from the collections in the Local Studies Library. A number of images relating to workhouses in Sheffield are available to view on Picture Sheffield.

Trade Directories

Trade directories were issued from the mid 18th century until around 1945 and can be seen as the 'Yellow Pages' of their day. Broadly speaking they list addresses, names and occupations or trades and historical and geographical information. Information about the Sheffield workhouses is given in various trade directories. See for example, William White's *History, gazetteer and directory*, 1833 which describes the workhouse in each township of the Parish of Sheffield.

A comprehensive collection is available at the Local Studies Library, whilst a smaller selection is available at Sheffield Archives. See: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/trade-directories.html> for more information.

Census Records

The census returns for the whole of England and Wales are available for free at any Sheffield Library using Ancestry.com (via www.ancestrylibrary.com on any Sheffield Libraries computer). Census returns for Sheffield 1841 - 1911 are also available on microform at both the Local Studies Library and Sheffield Archives.

Parish Records

See civil parish records at Sheffield Archives for information about the Overseers of the Poor, notably: Ecclesfield (PR54), Tinsley (PR144), Todwick (PR1), Harthill (PR47), Hooton Roberts (PR26), Rawmarsh (PR80), Maltby (PR82), Thorpe Salvin (PR39), Whiston (PR37) and Worsbrough (PR3).

Sheffield's Early Workhouses

Sources relating to workhouses which were set up in the 'ancient' parish of Sheffield before 1834. The old parish of Sheffield included the townships of Attercliffe-cum-Darnall, Upper Hallam, Nether Hallam, Brightside, Sheffield and Ecclesall. There are also records for other townships such as Handsworth, which later became part of the City of Sheffield.

- **The central Sheffield workhouse:**

Minutes and accounts of the Town Trustees, 1566 - 1707
(*Sheffield Archives: TT*)

J. D. Leader, *The Records of the Burgery of Sheffield*, 1897
(*Sheffield Archives: TT Print Source*)

J. D. Leader, *Extracts from the Earliest Book of Accounts belonging to the Town Trustees of Sheffield 1566 to 1707*, Leader & Sons, Sheffield:1879
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: Local Pamphlets, Vol.60, 042 SST*)

Rules for the Sheffield workhouse with week's menu for the poor, Sheffield, c.1750
(*Sheffield Archives: CA24/57*)

Sheffield workhouse visitors' book of signatures of surgeons and overseers, 1762 – 1774; list of masters and persons recommending certificates for foundling children, 1768 and 1869; weekly number in workhouse, 1771 - 1774
(*Sheffield Archives: CA24/56*)

Appointment of surgeons for Sheffield workhouse, 1756
(*Sheffield Archives: TC/166*)

Brief heads of the bill for a proposed new workhouse, Sheffield, 1791
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: J042S*)

Letter and newscutting relating to site of new Sheffield workhouse, 1804
(*Sheffield Archives: LC7/5 and LC7/7*)

Resolution that committee be appointed and empowered to create a new workhouse in Sheffield, 1804
(*Sheffield Archives: MD1123*)

Appeal to the public by Robert Hadfield concerning the state of Sheffield workhouse, 1804
(*Sheffield Archives: MD3734/1*)

Broadsheet regarding the need for a new workhouse in Sheffield and where it should be situated, 1804
(*Sheffield Archives: SY96/Z1/1*)

Resolution passed at meeting of committee regarding the workhouse at West Bar, Sheffield (including newspaper cutting), 4 June 1804
(*Sheffield Archives: JC/1480; JC/1481*)

Observations on the workhouse at West Bar, Sheffield with remarks by John Browne, 18 May 1804
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP27VL*)

Letter from Robert Hadfield regarding West Bar workhouse, Sheffield, 1804
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP143L*)

T. J. Caulton, 'The Sheffield Workhouse near Kelham Island' in *Aspects of Sheffield 1*, pp. 167-181 (Wharncliffe Publishing, 1997)
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.74 S; also available at a number of community libraries*)

James Wheat, *Observations on the Present State of the Poor of Sheffield, with Proposals for their Future Employment and Support*, Wm. Ward, Sheffield [printed]: 1774
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 352.9 S*)

Substance of William Ward's speech at Sheffield Town Hall, 6 April 1791,
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 362.5 SST*)

Papers concerning Sheffield Workhouse (and other workhouses), c. 1791 - 1803 [including printed booklet titled "Brief heads of a bill for providing a new Workhouse in the town of Sheffield" - with annotations, 1791; Sub-Committee printed notice to inhabitants of Sheffield about site of proposed new workhouse, 1804; account of expenses of maintaining the poor of the township of Brightside Bierlow in the Parish of Sheffield, 1799 - 1803; signed letter from Sheffield physicians and surgeons declaring that the present conditions of Sheffield Workhouse are 'injurious' to the health of pauper inmates, Jan 1801
(*Sheffield Archives: WC/3272*)

- **Workhouses in other townships and parishes:**

Vestry minutes (including regulations for poor house at Attercliffe), Attercliffe-cum-Darnall, 1819 - 1884
(*Sheffield Archives: CA15/3*)

Vestry minutes (which discuss the building of a new workhouse in 1801), Brightside Bierlow, 1801 – 1858)
(*Sheffield Archives: CA16/6*)

Lease of land by Duke of Norfolk on which new Brightside workhouse stands, 1802
(*Sheffield Archives: CA354/1*)

Sketch of workhouse by Henry Tatton showing entrance, Rock St, Pitsmoor, Brightside Bierlow, c.1920s
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.74 SQ*)

Valuation of Brightside Poor House, 1839
(*Sheffield Archives: SY141/81/1*)

Agreement between overseers of Brightside Bierlow and Sheffield Guardians to allow use of Brightside workhouse as a refuge for cholera, 1854
(*Sheffield Archives: CA354/2*)

Notebooks of the Overseers of the Poor (noting number in the workhouse), 1827 – 1830, Ecclesall Bierlow
(*Sheffield Archives: CA18/6-8*)

Plan of Sharrow Moor, 1769 showing proposed workhouse
(*Sheffield Archives: FC SheD 624 S*)

Overseers of the Poor monthly disbursements (including note of persons in workhouse), Handsworth, 1798 - 1821
(*Sheffield Archives: X545/1*)

Overseers of the Poor monthly disbursements (including note of persons in workhouse), Handsworth, 1821 - 1832
(*Sheffield Archives: CA19/8*)

General accounts - includes accounts of the Overseers of the Poor and details butcher's supplies to workhouse, Handsworth, 1821 - 1832
(*Sheffield Archives: CA19/18*)

Disbursements including expenses for out-pensioners and workhouse, Nether Hallam, 1795 – 1799
(*Sheffield Archives: CA21/21-22*)

Turner and Elgie, drapers to the workhouse: accounts, Nether Hallam, 1800 - 1801
(*Sheffield Archives: CA21/24*)

Draft constitution for a workhouse at Wortley built by the Countess of Devonshire, 1642
(*Sheffield Archives: MD5860*)

Deeds concerning house at Tpton Hill, Sheffield, in use as workhouse, 1753
(*Sheffield Archives: SC/632-646*)

Account of maintenance of a pauper at Thurgoland workhouse, 1843
(*Sheffield Archives: SY56/P10/1*)

Sale of Silkstone poor houses to R. Gouldwell, 1864
(*Sheffield Archives: SY359/P1/12*)

David Diver, *Round and about Grenoside Vol.5: Life in Grenoside Workhouse*, 2008
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 362.11 SQ*)

Poor law valuation map, c. 1864
Shows Grenoside workhouse.
(*Sheffield Archives: SY555/C2/1R*)

Guardians' minutes 1838 - 1929; committee minutes 1884 - 1929, Wortley Poor Law Union
(*Sheffield Archives: SY164A*)

Photocopies and microfiche of Bradfield Poor Law Union papers, (*Sheffield Archives: MD7277*). Note: original records are retained by Bradfield Parish Council. Contact the Parish Archivist for more information:
Malcolm.Nunn@bradfield-yorks-pc.gov.uk More information is available on Bradfield Parish Council's website: www.bradfield-yorks-pc.gov.uk

Papers concerning Wortley Union Workhouse, 1880 - 1881
(*Sheffield Archives: LD2099*)

New Poor Law, 1834

Opposition to appointment of Sheffield Guardians, 1836 - 1837
(*Sheffield Archives: CA40/4-15*)

Pamphlet concerning the iniquities of the New Poor Law, 1838
(*Sheffield Archives: SY619/Z8/30*)

Particulars of Unions in the West Riding of Yorkshire, c.1905. Lists each Poor Law Union in the county with the townships in each, population statistics, number of Guardians, etc.
(*Sheffield Archives: SY458/C1/1*)

Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse (later Nether Edge Hospital)

Joan Flett, *The Story of the Workhouse and the Hospital at Nether Edge* (ALD Design & Print, Sheffield, second edition: 2002)
(*Sheffield Archives: FLE HEALTH; Sheffield Local Studies Library: 362.11 SQ; also available at a number of community libraries*)

Creed (Admission) Registers, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1890 - 1931
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/1-5*)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

An index to inmates admitted to Ecclesall Bierlow Workhouse, 1890 - 1907 (including some references to people, living in the workhouse at the time, who were admitted as far back as 1883) is available to search online:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies/collections/workhouses-and-poor-law-unions.html>

Register of births, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1898 - 1929
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/14*)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

Register of deaths, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1903 - 1931
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/15*)

Registers of Inmates, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1904 - 1931
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/6-7*)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

Asylum register of admissions, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1920 - 1928
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/12-13*)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

Index books of inmates names, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1914 - 1931
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/5/9-10*)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

Account books, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1842
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/2/1/1*)

Workhouse farm account book, Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse, 1895 - 1948
(*Sheffield Archives: NHS21/2/2/1*)

For other official records relating to the Ecclesall Bierlow Union Workhouse and later Nether Edge Hospital see: Sheffield Archives, NHS21 (catalogue searchable online at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a).

Reports, with lists of officers and accounts etc., 1913, 1916-1919, 1921-1923
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 352.9 S*)

Plans of Ecclesall Union Poor House by William Flockton, Architect, 1840 - 1841 (*Sheffield Archives: AP/43/1-12*)

Plans of Ecclesall Guardians hospital at the union, c. 1912
(*Sheffield Archives: AP/107 and AP/108*)

Ecclesall Bierlow Union: Fulwood Cottage Homes

The Public Assistance Committee took over the work of the Board of Guardians in April 1930. Fulwood Cottage Homes closed in 1960 and became Moorside Approved School. The records of the Public Assistance Committee are at Sheffield Archives (CA41) and include:

Registers of Children, Ecclesall Union Fulwood Cottage Homes, 1905 – 1936
(*Sheffield Archives: CA41/37-38 and 2006/13*)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

Dunn, Marjorie P., *For the Love of Children: A Story of the Poor Children of Sheffield and of Fulwood Cottage Homes* (Sheffield, 1988)
(*Sheffield Archives: DUN LOCAL*)

Sheffield Union: Fir Vale Workhouse (later Northern General Hospital)

Lyn Howsam, *Memories of the Workhouse and Old Hospital at Fir Vale*, ALD Design & Print, Sheffield: 2002
(*Sheffield Archives: HOW HEALTH; Sheffield Local Studies Library: 362.11 SQ; also available at a number of community libraries*)

Lyn Howsam, *Life in the Workhouse and Old Hospital at Fir Vale*, ALD Design & Print, Sheffield: 2006
(*Sheffield Archives: HOW HEALTH; Sheffield Local Studies Library: 362.11 SQ; also available at a number of community libraries*)

Peter Speck, *The Institution and Hospital at Fir Vale: a centenary history of the Northern General Hospital, Sheffield* (Northern General Hospital, 1978)
(*Central Library Store: 362.110942 Q*)

Lyn Howsam, 'Fir Vale Workhouse' in *Family Tree Magazine*, vol. 22, no. 3, Jan 2006
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 929.3 SQ*)

'Glimpses of the old workhouse [at Fir Vale]', *Northern General Hospital History Project*
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 4036 S*)

'From workhouse to hospital', *The Flowing Stream*, vol. 27, no. 1, Spring 2006
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 929.2 SQ)
Letter book of Sheffield Poor Law Union, 1844 - 1845
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA625)

Guardians' letter books, Sheffield Poor Law Union, 1847 - 1861. Indexed and include admission case histories.
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA24/54-55)

Minutes of Guardians' meetings, Sheffield Poor Law Union, 1890 - 1930.
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA692/1-35)

Registers of Officers' appointments, 1876 - 1913
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA24/51-53)

Workhouse punishment book, Fir Vale Institution, 1903 - 1926
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA510/1)

Photograph of large scale plan of Fir Vale Workhouse, 1907
(*Sheffield Archives*: MD6622)

Newscuttings relating to the last meeting of Sheffield Poor Law Overseers, 1927
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA17/11)

'Hadden's Ingredient Calculator': used in preparation of food in accordance with the workhouse regulations, 1900
(*Sheffield Archives*: CA510/5)

Statement of accounts (some gaps), 1884 - 1930
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 352.9 S)

Guardian handbook and list of committees, 1894 - 1904; 1906 - 1929
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 352.9 SQ)

Statement of accounts of the Guardians of the Sheffield Union and of the separate townships and parish therein, 1893
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: Local Pamphlets vol.229, No.16, 042 S)

Sheffield Union special report of classification committee, 1902
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library*: 352.9 SST)

Sheffield Union: Scattered Homes

The Public Assistance Committee took over the work of the Board of Guardians in April 1930. The records of the Public Assistance Committee are at Sheffield Archives (CA41) and include:

Registers of Children, Sheffield Union Children's Home, Herries Road, Fir Vale and Scattered Homes, 1894 - 1939. Includes particulars and where sent on discharge from the home.

(Sheffield Archives: CA41/33-36 and 2006/13)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

Admission and discharge slips, Scattered Homes, 1940s - 1950s

(Sheffield Archives: 2006/13 vols.8a-8h)

Information contained in these records may be subject to restricted access; please refer to Sheffield Archives for advice on how to access restricted items.

The Children of the State: Sheffield's Successful Experiment reprinted from 'The Councillor and Guardian', 1898 [and] *The Scattered Homes for Children: historical sketch...* presented by the Children's Homes Committee to the Sheffield Board of Guardians, 20 March 1907 (Sheffield Independent Press, 1907) [Facsimile reprint of both issued in one volume, 2006] *(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 339.1S)*

Websites

The Workhouse website includes maps, photographs and short histories of the Sheffield workhouses: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Sheffield/>

Nineteenth century Poor Law Union and workhouse records can be found at The National Archives:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/workhouse.asp

Sheffield Archives and Local Studies services collect and preserve original records and printed material relating to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The information dates from the 12th century to the present and relates to Sheffield, South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire.

Included are extensive collections of books • pamphlets • photographs • church registers • newspapers • census records • minutes • diaries • films • maps • deeds • records from schools • hospitals • businesses and charities • family estates • personal papers etc.

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For 55,000 images of Sheffield: www.picturesheffield.com	

	www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives
	www.twitter.com/shefflibraries
	www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries/collections/72157629374979280/
	www.youtube.com/user/SheffieldArchives1
	www.facebook.com/shefflibraries