

Guidance on employing workers aged 16 to 18

Skills for Care encourages employers to help young workers become apprentices.

This guidance confirms that 16 - 18 year old practitioners can be employed in adult social care providing:

- they have completed or are undertaking an approved training programme in health and social care
- the registered manager or a delegated person assesses the competence and confidence of the young worker to carry out all the tasks required of them, including where necessary intimate personal care
- that appropriate support is offered to the young worker
- the consent of the person being supported and/or their advocate has been obtained
- inexperienced practitioners are not left in charge of a care setting or left to work on their own.

The guidance underlines that assessing workers' competence, giving them appropriate support and obtaining the consent of those being supported are issues that apply to workers of all ages not just those under 18.

Skills for Care CEO, Sharon Allen, said: "Our advice to employers is that one of the most efficient ways to make sure their young workers are on an approved training programme is to support them to enrol on an Apprenticeship within the adult social care sector."

Approved training programmes, such as Apprenticeships, are those recognised by Skills for Care which lead to qualifications and that are included in the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Skills for Care says these training programmes are beyond those that are intended just to meet the requirements of the Common Induction Standards, but it reminds employers too that those standards apply to workers of all ages who are new in post.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) backs the reissuing of this guidance to make sure employers are fully informed about what they need to employ a young worker. CQC Chief Executive, David Behan, said, "CQC supports the view of Skills for Care that 16 and 17 year olds can make a valuable contribution to the adult social care sector.

It is vital that when working with this age group providers not only meet the essential standards of safety and quality but follow best practice guidelines and this guidance from Skills for Care is a welcome addition to that."

For further information visit:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships

