

Ongoing learning and development in adult social care:

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Why have Skills for Care created this resource?

We often receive questions from employers and managers about the training their workforce has to undertake and how often they should refresh training.

The lack of clear and coordinated guidance available has, in some cases, led to situations where workers have not updated their knowledge and skills for numerous years and other circumstances where workers arbitrarily repeat the same training every year. Neither of these scenarios promotes effective learning and development.

We acknowledge that many organisations will have effective, competency-based, learning and development programmes in place and are not suggesting that this resource should be adopted by all adult social care organisations. The intention is to provide answers to some frequently asked questions, and to support employers to consider how best the competency of their workforce is monitored, assessed and developed.

2. What's the difference between 'required', 'recommended' and 'suggested' refresher periods?

- **Requirements** are 'must dos'. They are generally from legislation. In the case of First Aid, workers must complete First Aid training every three years to be considered competent and count towards an organisation's number of First Aiders.
- **Recommendations** are based on best practice and/or official guidance. For instance, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides a recommendation that workers refresher medication training annually.
- **Suggestions** are provided where no clear requirement or recommendation is available. Suggested timescales for refreshers are based on previous Skills for Care discussions and consultations with the adult social care sector.

3. Does the information apply to services not registered with the CQC?

The resource applies to both regulated and non-regulated services and all social care service settings.

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activity) is heavily referenced, as are CQC's Key Lines of Enquiry and Fundamental Standards. Therefore, anything relating to these is a 'must do' for regulated services. However, it is good practice for any social care organisation to work to these.

There is also a lot of other legislation referenced e.g. health and safety legislation, Equality Act, Human Rights Act, which applies to all service settings – regulated and non-regulated.

4. What does 'refresher training' consist of?

Strictly speaking, the opportunity to 'refresh' learning would enable a worker to re-confirm or update prior knowledge/skills. However, this resource encourages employers to think beyond this and use the opportunity to refresh to not only update knowledge/skills, but to build on them and develop the workforce further.

The sort of refresher training delivered will depend on the learning outcomes needed. For instance, to 'refresh' First Aid, the worker must complete another First Aid course (Emergency First Aid at Work or First Aid at Work) every three years to be considered competent.

However, refreshing Equality and Diversity, might include some knowledge elements e.g. information sharing, e-learning or research, and some skills elements e.g. observations. It depends on what needs to be achieved, the worker's current level of competence and any additional opportunities to develop that can be offered.

5. Are all the learning areas statutory?

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activity) Regulations 2014 state that teams must be 'suitability qualified, competent, skilled and experienced' and receive 'appropriate support, training, professional development... to enable them to carry out the duties they are

employed to perform’.

Whilst this doesn’t dictate specific areas of training, it does indicate that where a worker needs training to be competent, they must receive it.

Only a few pieces of legislation make specific training statutory, and this tends to apply to Health and Safety. Quotes are included under each piece of legislation which indicate whether training is statutorily required. E.g. **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Regulation 21: Training** ‘The responsible person must ensure that his employees are provided with adequate safety training...’

We would advise that all employers provide their teams with all the training within this document as a minimum.

6. Don’t the refresher timescales within the ‘On-going learning and development’ document promote a ‘tick box’ attitude to refreshing training?

No, the timescales are there to provide employers with an idea of when training should be refreshed (and in some cases when it is required). However, emphasis throughout the document is on workers’ competence and encouraging employers to assess this regularly and address learning and development needs as they arise.

7. Why reference the Apprenticeship Standards?

The new Apprenticeship Standards will replace the Apprenticeship Frameworks over the next couple of years. The Standards are designed by employers working in the adult social care sector and have been consulted on widely, therefore truly represent the skills and knowledge required in different job roles and are applicable across the different service settings within social care.

However, in some cases the Standards do not clearly fit into an area of learning. Employers are encouraged to use the guidance from the Standards as a starting point and consider what additional learning outcomes would be required.

8. Who can I contact about the ‘On-going learning and development’ resource?

If you have a comment regarding the document or have noticed something out of date, please contact slqa@skillsforcare.org.uk