

Frequently asked questions about personal assistants doing the Care Certificate

Introduction

The Care Certificate was introduced in April 2015 and is intended to be one part of the induction for staff who are employed as health care assistants, assistant practitioners, care support workers and those giving support to clinical roles in the NHS where there is any direct contact with patients. “Care support workers” includes the following: adult social care workers giving direct care in residential settings, nursing homes and hospices, homecare workers and domiciliary care staff. These staff are referred to collectively as healthcare support workers (HCSW) or adult social care workers (ASCW).

The Care Certificate is comprised of 15 standards and sets out explicitly the learning outcomes, competences and standards of care that will be expected in both social care and health, ensuring that HCSWs/ASCWs are caring, compassionate and provide quality care.

General information

To support the roll out of the Care Certificate for health and adult social care organisations and the wider public questions and answers have been developed; these will be regularly revised.

A full set of questions and answers for health and social care professionals can be found [here](#).

A full set of questions and answers for the public can be found [here](#).

Personal assistant (PA) and Individual Employer specific FAQs

Do personal assistants have to complete the Care Certificate?

A personal assistant (PA) working for someone with care and support needs (an individual employer) met via a social care budget, personal health budget (PHB) or self-funding does not have to have completed the Care Certificate.

If the PA is employed by a care quality commission (CQC) regulated provider, then they would be expected to complete the Care Certificate if they are new to care.

The Care Certificate was developed to support the induction of those new to care, but could be used to support existing employees. Employers are responsible for judging whether the jobs of individual staff require them to meet the additional standards in the Care Certificate. A self-assessment tool and mapping document have been developed to help the employers decide what further training, if any, may be necessary for a worker.

Does a PA performing delegated healthcare tasks have to complete the Care Certificate?

The Care Certificate is intended to be part of an induction for staff employed as health care assistants, assistant practitioners, care support workers and those giving support to clinical roles in the NHS where there is any direct contact with patients.

For PAs performing delegated healthcare tasks the Care Certificate is not mandatory but is considered best practice. In order for the Care Certificate to be awarded a person must demonstrate that they have achieved all of the required competences.

Why should a PA complete the Care Certificate?

Everyone working in social care and health should receive an induction when they start a new role. Because individual employers all have unique requirements, the content of an induction often varies to reflect their specific care needs.

The Care Certificate sets out 15 standards with learning outcomes designed to ensure people who need care and support receive compassionate and high quality care; the standards can be viewed [here](#). The Care Certificate can be used as part of a PA induction which for some will form the introduction to their career in social care and/or health.

Can a PA complete only part of the Care Certificate?

It is possible to use separate standards to form the basis of training but the Care Certificate will only be awarded if all 15 standards are completed and the PA's skills are deemed proficient in a work place assessment. Within the workplace assessment the employer must be satisfied their employee meets all standards of the Care Certificate.

What role does an individual employer have in supporting their PA in completing the Care Certificate?

An individual employer may wish to judge whether their PA could benefit from completing some or all of the Care Certificate, based on their [the PA's] skills and training needs.

Employers are responsible for assuring the quality of the teaching and assessment of the Care Certificate. The assessment must be carried out by someone who is 'occupationally competent'; this is someone who has the necessary experience to judge whether the learner has demonstrated the required competences.

The guidance does not specify that someone delivering the training and carrying out assessment needs a specific qualification. The person who does this could be the individual employer if they are experienced and have the confidence to assess someone; or another PA could be used if they have sufficient care experience in assessing others. Employers may find the list of [National Occupational Standards \(NOS\)](#) for assessing learning and development useful when considering the competencies required for assessment.

Where an employer or their existing staff do not feel confident or competent to assess, they may wish to consider support from: the organisation issuing their budget [if they receive one], a local support organisation or a training provider.

What training and support is available for individual employers wanting their staff to undertake the Care Certificate?

Individual employers using a budget from social care or their own funds to employ a PA can apply for funding from Skills for Care to cover the full cost of care related training for both themselves and their personal assistants. Employers with a PHB should contact the NHS organisation that has issued their funding to discuss the training needs for themselves and their PA.

During 2015-16 Skills for Care will work with a number of organisations exploring different ways of delivering the Care Certificate for PAs or supporting individual employers to assess their staff against the Care Certificate. Examples of local approaches, case studies and best practice information will be published as this work progresses. Early examples of local activity include:

- a local authority making its internal assessment team available to support individual employers
- a user-led organisation trialling the use of a pool of 'family assessors'; relatives of people in need of care and support who have experience of what good care for their relative looks like in specific circumstances and who can work with them to assess their PAs.