

Care Certificate standards updated 2025

Questions and answers for health and adult social care professionals

This set of frequently asked questions has been produced by NHS England, Skills for Care and Skills for Health to support the use of the updated Care Certificate standards 2025.

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1. What are the Care Certificate standards?

In 2013 following the Francis Inquiry the then Secretary of State for Health asked Camilla Cavendish (now Baroness Cavendish) to review and make recommendations on the recruitment, learning and development, management and support of healthcare assistants and adult social care support workers, to help ensure that this workforce provided compassionate care. The result was the Care Certificate standards.

The Care Certificate standards were developed for use in England and are a recommended tool to support minimum training, supervision and assessment that staff new to care (health and adult social care) should receive as part of induction. The standards help to provide a foundation for healthcare support and adult social care worker roles, ensuring that the new worker can provide a compassionate and caring service.

The Care Certificate standards are made up of 16 standards, which involve acquiring key knowledge, practical skills and workplace assessments. Completion of all standards is required to attain recognition of achievement.

2. Are the Care Certificate standards the same as the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification?

No, these are two different learning products. The Care Certificate standards are recommended and non-accredited and can be used by health and adult social care providers. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification is accredited and regulated by Ofqual. The qualification aims to provide a route for the adult social care workforce to gain a recognised qualification.

3. Who can achieve the Care Certificate standards?

The Care Certificate standards are aimed at the following types of workers joining a health or adult social care organisation without any past training or sector experience. However, employers are free to decide whether any other staff groups would benefit from undertaking some or all of the Care Certificate Standards.

- **Healthcare**
Healthcare support workers/health care assistants/assistant practitioners/any individual giving support to clinical roles in the NHS where there is any direct contact with patients.
- **Adult social care**
Workers providing direct care to people accessing a variety of social care settings, which may include residential, nursing homes, hospices, domiciliary care, supported living services, shared lives services and extra care housing. Roles may include care assistant, care worker, homecare worker, care support workers.

4. Do the Care Certificate standards replace staff induction?

No. The Care Certificate standards can be a part of a structured induction but do not replace all the learning required for staff induction. As well as the Care Certificate standards new workers will be expected to have information, knowledge and competences specific to the environment in which care will be provided. For example, new support workers may receive induction on how to report accidents and

what to do in case of fire which will be specific to the location in which they work. Other context specific knowledge and skills would be related to the patient and service user groups the support worker will be supporting. The content of this remains the employer's responsibility.

5. Do the Care Certificate standards replace the need for 'statutory and mandatory' training?

No. For those individuals joining with no past training and experience, each employer is likely to run a series of training sessions for their new support workers. It is possible that these courses – sometimes referred to as 'statutory and mandatory training' may cover some content of the Care Certificate standards. Employers still need to deliver their 'statutory and mandatory' training and complement this with an induction programme and additional training, supervision and workplace assessment. Employers can use the Care Certificate standards as a framework to help them achieve this.

6. Are Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulated providers expected to cover the Care Certificate Standards?

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: [Regulation 18: Staffing - Care Quality Commission](#)

18(2) Persons employed by the service provider in the provision of a regulated activity must - **18(2)(a)** receive such appropriate support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal as is necessary to enable them to carry out the duties they are employed to perform.

Employers and providers can use the Care Certificate standards as a framework to help them achieve this, to make sure new support workers are supported, skilled and assessed as competent to carry out their roles.

7. Is the achievement of the Care Certificate standards based only on knowledge?

No, to achieve the Care Certificate standards the person must acquire knowledge and demonstrate competence in all 16 standards. Assessment of knowledge and

understanding is prefixed with verbs such as “describe”, “explain”, “define”, “list” or “identify” and can be based upon written or verbal evidence such as a workbook, written questions, case studies or sound files. Evidence of performance prefixed with words such as “demonstrate”, “take steps to”, “use” or “show” must be undertaken in the workplace during learners’ real work activity and observed by the assessor (unless the use of simulation is specifically allowed). Support workers can practice and develop their skills in a classroom or similar setting but most of the assessment evidence must be collected during real work activity.

8. Can employers outsource the Care Certificate standards training, supervision and workplace assessment to learning providers?

Yes, but the employer remains responsible for the decision to award the full certificate of achievement, irrespective of who undertakes the training, supervision or assessment. For health and care services commissioning out some parts of the Care Certificate standards to a learning provider, they must carefully select these based on their ability to effectively provide the training required for the setting.

9. What happens if the care we provide means some parts of the Care Certificate standards cannot be completed?

If the support worker is unable to complete all the standards and their related assessments successfully, the full certificate of achievement cannot be awarded. Employers may choose to certificate for the elements completed but must not use the Care Certificate logo.

10. When and how should the Care Certificate standards be signed off?

The full certificate of achievement can be awarded by the employer of any healthcare support or adult social care worker who completes all standards. The Care Certificate should not be signed off until the new support worker has completed all 16 of the standards.

The health or adult social care employer must take responsibility for final sign off. External learning providers who may have supported the training delivery must not sign and issue the certificate.

In the absence of the registered manager in adult social care, it is recommended that the employer uses the most senior person (this may vary dependant on size of the care organisation but could include the responsible individual, a director, registered nurse, assistant manager, senior care worker or registered manager of another service within the same company, if relevant).

It is strongly recommended that the health or adult social care organisation uses the national Care Certificate template. A PDF and Word version is available, and the employer can choose to add their own logo onto the latter if they wish. The certificate should be given to the health or adult social care worker along with access to their portfolio of evidence or similar (to support portability). The employer will also need to keep associated records for regulation and audit purposes.

11. How can the quality of the Care Certificate standards be assured?

The employer is responsible for assuring the quality of training, supervision and assessment of ability of their healthcare support and adult social care workers. Providers of health and care have a duty to ensure that people are safe, and their health and welfare needs are met. They must ensure that their staff are competent to carry out their work and are properly trained, supervised and appraised. Where employers use the Care Certificate standards, they are responsible for assuring the quality of the teaching and assessment associated to the delivery of the Care Certificate standards.

12. Should staff new to an employer but with previous health or adult social care experience achieve the Care Certificate standards?

Employers should ensure that any skills and knowledge are current and can use the self-assessment tool to identify gaps or refreshers required in skills and knowledge. The employer would then arrange any additional training and/or workplace assessment needed. In some cases, this may mean that the employer may require the individual to complete the Care Certificate standards if appropriate for their learning needs.

13. If a support worker has already achieved qualifications or an apprenticeship in health or adult social care, should they achieve the Care Certificate standards?

Employers should ensure that any skills and knowledge are current and can use the self-assessment tool to identify gaps or refreshers required in skills and knowledge. The employer would then arrange any additional training and/or workplace assessment needed.

14. Do temporary workers/bank staff need to achieve the Care Certificate standards?

Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulated providers have a duty to assess the training needs of all staff new to their organisation. This applies to agency, bank or directly recruited healthcare support and adult social care workers.

15. Can the Care Certificate standards be completed as part of pre-employment training?

The Care Certificate standards were not originally developed to be part of pre-employment training. However there are elements of the knowledge which are transferable and could be achieved through pre-employment programmes. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure the knowledge gained in a prior setting is current and to arrange any additional training the worker may require. The self-assessment tool can be used to identify gaps or refreshers of required knowledge. Supervision and workplace assessment of competencies and skills will still be required to ensure the worker can apply the knowledge and demonstrate understanding in practice.

16. Do ancillary support and other non-health and care workers have to do the Care Certificate standards?

The Care Certificate standards were not developed to be undertaken in its entirety by all workers within health and social care provision. Roles such as receptionists, porters, cooks, kitchen staff, drivers, cleaners, finance clerks, etc. working within a health or adult social care organisation do not need to complete the Care Certificate. The employer may deem that some parts of the Care Certificate standards are relevant to their role (for example, in health care it is a requirement that all workers undertake adult safeguarding and safeguarding children awareness training).

17. Do voluntary workers need to achieve the Care Certificate standards?

This will depend on their experience, role and responsibilities. The role of volunteers within health and adult social care organisations will vary. Where their duties are very limited, the employer can simply deliver the appropriate points of the Care Certificate standards alongside other induction training. If the volunteer undertakes the same scope of duties as any other health or adult social care worker, then the full Care Certificate standards can be used (if the volunteer is inexperienced and not worked in the health or adult social care sector previously). If the volunteer has previous experience, the organisation should check evidence and assess their competences.

18. How do health and care providers assess the competence of those new to the sector working within the community?

The workplace assessment parts of the Care Certificate standards are equally important to those working in community roles and domiciliary care as any other health and adult social care service. Regulated providers are expected to assess the competence of the new support worker before they start delivering care out of line of sight of a more experienced colleague. Sufficient time should be planned to enable the assessor to undertake this important part of the induction process.

19. In adult social care, how do Shared Lives and live in care services assess the competence of those new to the sector?

If the service is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), employers still need to deliver their 'statutory and mandatory' training and complement this with an induction programme and additional training, supervision and workplace assessment. The Care Certificate standards can be used as a framework to help them achieve this if appropriate.

20. Are the Care Certificate Standards provided in other formats?

Employers or learning providers (where one is used) have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to the teaching, learning and assessment necessary to meet the Care Certificate standards and adjustments can be made to achieve this.

21. What do people undertaking the Care Certificate standards need to do to meet the outcomes for Standard 16 Awareness of learning disability and autism?

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) guidance in [Regulation 18: Staffing - Care Quality Commission](#) (2) (a) states: Providers must ensure that all staff receive training in how to interact appropriately with people with a learning disability and autistic people, at a level appropriate to their role.

For service providers regulated by the CQC, this is a requirement introduced by the Health and Care Act 2022 and further guidance provided by the CQC can be found [here](#).

Standard 16 in the Care Certificate standards updated 2025 refers to this requirement.

The intention behind Standard 16 in the Care Certificate standards is that this training and learning is viewed by providers in the same way as statutory and other mandatory training, as defined by the provider. Other Care Certificate standards similar in concept to this are Basic Life Support and Safeguarding Children. They are

typically achieved by completion of the providers selected training and learning in line with guidance provided.

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training is the government's preferred and recommended training for autism and learning disability awareness. It is one way a provider could evidence completion of Standard 16. The most important consideration is that Care Certificate standards learning aligns with the employing organisation's overarching strategy for autism and learning disability awareness training. Guidance is available on the [NHS England webpage](#) to support employers in this and is also available in the [Oliver McGowan code of practice](#)

Further information can also be found at [Skills for Care](#).

22. Will there be workbooks to support the updated 2025 standards?

Use of workbooks is not mandatory, and they were previously available as one resource to help a worker demonstrate the required knowledge across the standards. With advancements in working more digitally the workbooks have not been updated and will not be replaced.

Methods to evidence the required knowledge within the standards is at the discretion of the employer and/or the learning provider. We would always encourage the learning needs of the worker to be considered in this.

It is the owners (e.g., employer, learning provider) responsibility to ensure any resources they have developed to support the learner acquire and confirm their knowledge and/or use are up to date.

Assessment of knowledge evidence for the standards can include, but is not restricted to:

- 1:1 or group discussion
- oral or written/typed answers to questions
- small project such as a poster presentation
- multiple choice questions

Over time there has been increased use of eLearning programmes with associated assessment (e.g., questions/answers and/or multiple-choice questions) to support achievement of the knowledge components. Good eLearning is

primarily a way to acquire and demonstrate knowledge, but it is not suitable for acquiring and demonstrating skill. Therefore, the use of eLearning alone cannot provide full achievement of the Care Certificate standards.

Further information on assessment and use of eLearning can be found in the 2025 updated Assessor and employer guide.

The [elearning for healthcare platform](#) provides a free-to-access Care Certificate standards programme and provides opportunity for a worker to evidence the knowledge components, with use of reflective practice at the end of each standard to help consolidate learning. There are also learning materials available for those assessing the Care Certificate standards in the workplace.