

Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification frequently asked questions – March 2024 (v2)

Funding

Q: Who will be eligible for funding?

- Adult Social Care employers in both CQC regulated and non-regulated care settings will be eligible to apply for funding towards the cost for the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate for members of their workforce in direct adult social care roles (non-regulated professionals).
- Additionally, employers must be registered on the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Eligible direct care roles include care workers, senior care workers and community support and outreach roles.
- A learner must be aged 19 in order to enrol and receive funding for the qualification due to Government policy on the study of English and Mathematics.
- The funding will be applicable to England only and is for new and existing staff.

Q: Will the new Care Certificate qualification be available to healthcare staff as well as social care staff?

- The new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification has been developed for staff working in adult social care (ASC). Government funding towards Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualifications will only be available to staff working in an adult social care setting.
- Healthcare staff and their employers can choose to access the qualification if they want to. However, funding support under the forthcoming new learning and development fund, details to be announced in spring 2024, will only be available to employers and members of their workforce who meet the eligibility criteria for this fund.

Q: How will the funding work?

- Government will be providing an investment of £53.91m. This will support up to 37,000 individuals in direct adult social care roles to enrol on the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification between June 2024 and March 2025
- Eligible employers will be able to apply for reimbursements towards the cost of the qualification on behalf of their employees. This investment is dependent on demand for Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate places.
- Employers will claim via a new digital service. Further details of how the reimbursement platform will work and the contribution per place on the qualification will be released in due course.

Q: What will happen to the qualification and funding after March 2025?

- Funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is currently available for enrolments up to March 2025. This is due to the government's set funding periods. It is our intention to seek further funding for the qualification beyond March 2025 to establish the qualification into the sector but this cannot yet be confirmed.

Induction and Mandatory training

Q: How will the qualification align to other mandatory training requirements, competency sign-off, recommendations and developments in the sector?

- Every care worker's journey will be different, and the introduction of the Care Certificate as a qualification does not replace the employer's responsibility to provide appropriate support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal as necessary to enable the worker to carry out the duties they are employed to perform. Employers are expected to provide a robust induction as part of this process.
- It is the employer's responsibility to ensure staff undergo any mandatory training as part of an induction and relevant mandatory training cycles. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate has been designed to build on employer's support, training, professional development, supervision, appraisal and induction.
- Learning Outcomes in the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification have also been updated for an awareness of learning disability and autism. These have been updated to be consistent with learning outcomes from the Core Capabilities Frameworks for supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people.
- The final Oliver McGowan code of practice will provide guidance for CQC-regulated employers on how to meet the statutory requirement for learning disability and autism training in the Health and Care Act 2022. It is expected that all learners undertaking the Care Certificate who work for regulated service providers will have attended training that meets the standards in the code of practice prior to or alongside completing the new qualification.

Q: Why is the government introducing this when the sector already accesses learning, training and assessment based on the Care Certificate standards?

- Currently delivery of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate standards is not uniform, and organisations often require new staff to repeat learning, training and assessment from scratch, even if staff have already completed the Care Certificate in a different organisation. Many providers will deliver the Care Certificate themselves in-house which leads to different ways of delivering and assessing the content, despite the foundational standards being the same.
- The Department has developed a new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification based on the existing Care Certificate standards. By introducing a new qualification for the sector, the aim is to address these issues of lack of portability and lack of standardisation in how the Care Certificate standards are delivered. The new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will provide a baseline standard and help recognise our care workforce and the professional career that it is.
- Turnover of staff is 9% lower where there is access to learning opportunities to gain skills and qualifications, and investing and supporting staff to develop their careers will act as an incentive for people to join, develop and stay in the workforce.
- The qualification will not be mandatory at the moment. From June 2024 funding towards the cost of the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification will be made available.
- Under the Department's current plans, staff who already have a relevant qualification will be able to do the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification if they want to, but

we will encourage care providers to prioritise staff without a relevant qualification to enable them to benefit from gaining one.

Q: What is going to happen to the existing Care Certificate Standards?

- We are liaising with sector bodies and the CQC on the future of the Care Certificate Standards and will be sharing more guidance on this in the coming months. The existing Care Certificate standards should continue to be accessed and used by the adult social care sector while this work is underway. The introduction of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate does not replace the need for employer-specific induction or mandatory training process.

Qualification delivery – Employers and Training providers

Q. Which Awarding Organisations are developing the qualification?

- You can find a list of Awarding Organisations (AO) developing the qualification online [here](#).
- To note, development of the specification is subject to gaining final approval via Skills for Care.

Q: Do providers have to be registered and approved by an Awarding Organisation (AO) to deliver the qualification?

- Yes, you need to be approved by an AO (who are approved by Ofqual) to deliver the qualification. The list of AOs who are developing the qualification can be found on the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate page on Skills for Care's website.

Q: How will we source the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification for the adult social care workforce?

- You will need to contract a learning/training provider who has been approved by an AO to deliver the qualification.

Q: How will quality be assured of the new qualification?

- Quality is the responsibility of all those involved in delivering the qualification and this is formally monitored by the AO who has approved the centre to deliver the qualification.
- Skills for Care will be quality assuring the qualifications submitted by AOs and we expect AOs to provide a robust explanation of how they will be competency of their approved centres.
- An AO carries out a formal approval process for learning centres looking to deliver all qualifications.
- Quality of provision and any potential risks with centre delivery are then continually monitored by the AO through several approaches including regular compliance monitoring and external quality assurance activities.

Q: What happens when there might be considerations or challenges in enabling access to the workplace to external assessors?

- There are robust Assessment Principles and guidance which are in place to create a consistent and fair approach to assessment in sector qualifications. Guidance is provided when additional factors need to be considered within the assessment process.

Learning and Assessment

Q: What expectations can staff have from enrolling onto the qualification?

- The qualification is comprised of 15 units based on the existing Care Certificate standards with some small changes to meet the standards of a Level 2 qualification and updates to reflect the current developments and needs of the Adult Social Care sector and workforce. The qualification is likely to take an average duration of 6-8 months to complete.
- The qualification has been designed to improve standardisation, quality and portability between care providers.
- Valid recognition of prior learning (RPL) and any other reliable learning and assessment undertaken either in induction or via time spent in the role could be used as evidence towards completing the qualification.
- The learning journey will depend on the needs of the individual. If they have more experience in the role it is likely they will already have evidence to support many elements of knowledge and skills requirements within the qualification (which will need to be verified and evidenced by the assessor) and therefore the learner may not need additional time away from their daily tasks. For those who are new to the sector and employers they will require more learning led by the employer or training provider.
- Learners will be assessed to ensure they are competent against the skills and knowledge set out in the qualification. The assessor will plan with the individual the best way to evidence against the requirements in the qualification and there are a range of assessment methods which can be used e.g. RPL, reflective accounts, questions, professional discussion, observation, work product evidence etc. For some elements of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate direct observation is required and will involve an assessor visiting the learner at their place of work.
- The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification does not replace the need for employer-specific induction or mandatory training and it is employers' responsibility to ensure this is completed. The employer may decide that the qualification can be completed alongside employer specific induction and mandatory training.

Q: How will assessment work?

- The assessment process is to ensure the learner is competent against a set of defined knowledge and skills. Assessments are carried out via qualified assessors.
- A learner will have regular formal assessment interventions. The assessor will plan with the individual the best way to evidence the requirements in the qualification and there are a range of assessment methods which can be used. The assessor can also adapt assessment methods depending on learner need, for example, if an individual does not feel confident expressing themselves in written format. The formal assessment cycle includes planning, review and feedback meetings to discuss the learners needs, what evidence is needed to meet the criteria of the qualification and progress. Once the learner has submitted evidence of knowledge and skills, the assessor will review against the qualification content and provide relevant feedback.

Q: What is the registered managers role in this?

- If you have decided that the Level 2 Adult Social Care qualification is the right route for your workforce, you'll need to find a learning/training provider to deliver this. Registered managers should liaise with the learning/training provider to understand the needs of the qualification and agree the best method of teaching, learning, assessment and delivery for learners. They should also support the assessor to plan their observation visits to mitigate any negative impact on individuals accessing care and support.
- Registered managers and others in the workplace with existing Care Certificate standards delivery experience can also act in a valuable role in the formal qualification assessment process, this might be by sharing relevant evidence from within the workplace which could be used, providing statements and support to the learner. There may also be if appropriate, opportunities for those in the workplace with existing Care Certificate standards delivery experience to become formally qualified assessors.

Q: How is this practically different to the standards?

- The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate differs to the current Care Certificate Standards in that it requires formal assessment as it is an accredited qualification. There is a greater depth of learning in the content of the qualification and as a result will take longer to complete. The qualification also includes up to date content to better reflect the current needs and developments of the adult social care workforce.
- The content of the qualification reflects the skills, knowledge and behaviours of the 'New to Care' category outlined in the [Care Workforce Pathway](#). The pathway demonstrates how a learner can develop within each category, building on their knowledge and skills to provide the best possible care to the people who receive their support.

Level 2 Qualifications

Q: What is the difference between this qualification, the diploma and apprenticeship?

- A learner must be 19+ in order to enrol and receive funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate due to Department for Education policy which requires learners to study English and Maths until aged 19.
- The Level 2 Diploma in Care is a longer qualification of approximately 12 months. We know that this is well recognised in the sector and many of the workforce have already achieved this. We do not expect learners to complete more than one qualification at Level 2.
- The Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship standards include Functional Skills and the Level 2 Diploma in Care. This is available to individuals from 16+. Therefore, the apprenticeship could act as suitable learning programme for those under 19 in the workforce, it can also be suitable for 19+ if deemed suitable for the needs of your workforce.
- The Department for Health and Social Care are working with the Department for Education and Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education as they progress discussions about the existing Level 2 landscape and content of the apprenticeship standard, while also considering aspects of national qualification reform. Government will provide further information and clarification in due course.

General Information

Q: Will the Care Quality Commission (CQC) recognise the qualification and report on it?

- The Department for Health and Social Care is working with CQC on the introduction of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate and how the qualification will be recognised and reported on. CQC regulation currently does not stipulate that staff should have a specific qualification but that employers should “deploy enough suitably qualified, competent and experienced staff to enable them to meet the needs of the people using the service at all times”. As it stands the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will be viewed in line with other Level 2 qualifications and is not mandatory but will be up to employers' discretion to enrol staff onto the qualification.