



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

## **Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate: factsheet for care providers and frequently asked questions**

**September 2024**

### **What is the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate?**

- The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is a new qualification which has been developed from the Care Certificate standards, it is accredited, portable and requires assessment of skills.
- The qualification is open to all eligible non-regulated care staff, aged 19+. This will not replace the Care Certificate standards, but knowledge gained from new starter induction may be used towards gaining the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate via recognition of prior learning.

### **Is funding available for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate?**

- The Learning and Development Support Scheme will have a digital online claims service that allows adult social care employers to claim funding for certain training courses and qualifications on behalf of eligible care staff. Funding will be available for eligible courses and qualifications that have been both paid for and started between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 (inclusive).
- The Learning and Development Support Scheme approved course list includes the **Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate Qualification**. Eligible employers can claim funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate on behalf of eligible care staff for up to £1500 per qualification. For the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate, a combined claims model will apply, wherein employers must claim 60% of the reimbursement value upon their employee starting the qualification, with the remaining 40% reimbursement provided upon proof of course completion.
- This funding is more limited than the previous scheme with no dedicated funding specifically for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate.
- The new guidance document provides details about the funding, including eligibility and how to access it: [Learning and Development Support Scheme for the adult social care workforce: a guide for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/learning-and-development-support-scheme-for-the-adult-social-care-workforce-a-guide-for-employers)

### **As an employer, am I eligible?**

- Should you want to claim for Government funding, you must:
  - Provide an adult social care service
  - Directly employ care staff in England
  - Have completed the [Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set \(ASC-WDS\)](#)

### **Why should I enrol my staff onto the qualification?**

- Developed from the care certificate standards the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification has been designed to ensure people in care roles have the most up to date knowledge and baseline skills required to support people well and succeed in their roles.
- The qualification provides the key knowledge and skills required for the 'New to Care' role in the [Care Workforce Pathway](#), employers may therefore decide it is appropriate for a new care worker to complete the qualification alongside employer specific induction and mandatory training.
- For those who may have been in the sector for several years and deserve to be acknowledged for the skilled care they provide, the qualification will also provide a route for them to gain a recognised qualification.
- Investing in training and supporting staff to develop their careers will act as an incentive for people to join, develop, and stay in the workforce.

### **Where do I find out more?**

- The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification launched to the sector on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and can be accessed via accredited training providers. The [qualification webpage](#) will be continually updated with information about the awarding organisations and training providers who deliver the qualification. In the meantime, please speak with your training provider to discuss delivery.

### **Key Facts**

Under the Department's current plans, it is encouraged for care providers to prioritise enrolling staff who don't hold a relevant qualification on to the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification to enable them to gain recognised skills and support progression in their role. Staff who already hold a relevant qualification may be enrolled and complete the qualification if they want to. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate sits alongside existing Level 2 options such as the Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship. We would not expect an individual to complete more than one

of these level 2 options and it is up to each employer and learner to decide which option is best for them.

The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate has a total qualification time (TQT) of 369 hours of learning. We expect this to take a new learner around 6 – 8 months to complete but an experienced care worker may complete this in a shorter period of time.

### **Interaction with other Level 2 Qualifications**

The Level 2 Adult Social Care qualification is available to learners who are aged 19+. Individuals can take the qualification at their own pace via an awarding organisation. The qualification does not contain any English and maths content so it may be more suitable for experienced individuals who need less support with these skills.

An apprenticeship is a paid job where individuals learn through a combination of workplace training and off-the-job training. Apprenticeships take at least a year to complete and are available to learners aged 16+.

It is important for younger learners, in line with Department for Education policy, to continue the study of English and maths until aged 19. This can be achieved through the Level 2 Adult Care Worker apprenticeship, and so this is a more suitable learning programme for this group. The apprenticeship can equip learners aged under 19 and above 19 with the skills they need for the future.

The current Care Certificate standards will still be able to be used as part of a robust induction process. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate has been built from the standards to reflect best practice and with the intention of this becoming the baseline standard of training within the first 6-12 months of joining the ASC workforce. Additionally, the new Level 2 is an accredited qualification and is eligible for government funding.

Awarding Organisations have developed the qualification and received approval from Skills for Care so that the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is now available for delivery by educational institutions or training providers since 3rd June 2024. A list of Awarding Organisations who have developed the qualification and had their qualification approved by Skills for Care and regulated by Ofqual can be found here [Approved Qualifications \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Approved-Qualifications)

### **Funding**

The Learning and Development Support Scheme will have a digital online claims service that allows adult social care employers to claim funding for certain training courses and qualifications on behalf of eligible care staff. Funding will be available for eligible courses and qualifications that have been both paid for and started between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 (inclusive).

The Learning and Development Support Scheme approved course list includes the **Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate Qualification**. Eligible employers can claim funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate on behalf of eligible care staff for up to £1500 per qualification.

This funding is more limited than the previous scheme with no dedicated funding specifically for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate.

ASC employers must complete an expression of interest survey [here](#). After completing the form, eligible employers will be contacted by NHS-BSA to start the onboarding process. This is a phased onboarding process, guided by NHS-BSA. For the first few months, access to the online claims service is only possible via an invitation from NHS-BSA.

As part of the onboarding process, eligible adult social care providers will be required to create a unique account. In order to create an account, claimants must complete (or have completed) the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) and provide verified bank account details. The ASC-WDS is a free online data collection service run by Skills for Care that covers the adult social care workforce in England.

For qualifications:

- employers should claim using the combined claims model, wherein employers must claim 60% of the reimbursement value upon their employee starting the qualification, with the remaining 40% reimbursement provided upon proof of course completion
- the initial 60% reimbursement claim must be made by the earliest date of either 21 March 2025 (inclusive) or within 3 months after the qualification start date. Late claims submitted between 22 and 31 March 2025 (inclusive) may be considered on a case-by-case basis
- the remaining 40% reimbursement claim must be made within 3 months of completion. When an eligible qualification has been both paid for and started between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 (inclusive) but completion extends beyond 31 March 2025, completed claims can be submitted up to 31 December 2026

The remaining 40% reimbursement for qualifications will only be provided if the training has been completed. Where a training course is completed but not passed (for example, failure to pass the final assessment), reimbursement may still be made provided proof of completion is supplied.

Note that the overall funding pot is limited. Once this has been exhausted, claims submitted will not receive reimbursement.

### **Non-UK Nationals**

Care staff do not need to have British citizenship to qualify for the Learning and Development Support Scheme as long as they are legally employed in England and have a UK National Insurance Number.

### **Key features of the qualification**

**Initial assessment and needs of the learner** – It is expected that centres delivering the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will carry out an initial assessment process. This process should ensure the learner can demonstrate the full requirements or if needed, act as an advisory process so the potential learner can reach the required standard to achieve the qualification by being sign posted to the most appropriate route.

**Variety of delivery** - Delivery and assessment should be appropriately planned to ensure the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is accessible for all and can be delivered across a range of care settings in the sector, in line with [the assessment principles and additional guidance](#). Employers and centres should adopt a flexible approach to the delivery of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate based on their current training and induction practices. An employer may decide to complete the qualification alongside employer specific induction and mandatory training or enrol learners onto the level 2 once they have completed their induction. However, the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification does not replace the need for employers to provide a robust induction including all mandatory training.

**Assessment models** - The qualification assessment strategy incorporates good practices as required within the [Skills for Care & Development Assessment principles](#) and [Skills for Care JABQG Additional Assessment Principles guidance Jan 2024 003](#). These principles support best practice in maintaining standardised approaches, upholding the rigour and integrity of work based qualifications in the sector. The amount of direct observation required should be appropriate to the qualification time, level and content, while considering the needs of the learner and setting. Centres should discuss and agree their assessment approach with their Awarding Organisation.

The sector has delivered the prior recommended Care Certificate standards since 2015, therefore there may be existing assessment skills in the workforce which could be utilised in the assessment and qualification process. The Department of Health and Social Care and Skills for Care have been clear with Awarding Organisations to support centres to consider how these skills could be safely utilised and developed e.g., through the role of an Expert Witness as part of the assessment process. If there are concerns around how direct observation will be carried out, for example, if employees are working in domiciliary care roles, then a conversation needs to be had with Awarding Organisations around what is possible, reasonable, and appropriate for the organisation or circumstances.

**Recognition of Prior Learning** – As highlighted in the qualification specification, it is expected that centres delivering the qualification clearly set out how prior learning (e.g. mandatory training, prior Care Certificate standards training) can be safely utilised where appropriate in the assessment process. This is particularly beneficial for those with experience in care enrolling onto the qualification with the assurance of where their skills can be evidenced and what can be taken into consideration as prior learning. Where relevant prior learning is identified it is expected that a learner's number of learning hours could be reduced.

**Partnership and clear communication** – Employers, centres and learners should have a clear understanding prior to undertaking the qualification of the commitment of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate with each taking an active role in its achievement.

**To support progression in the sector** – Beyond the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate, there are a range of other qualifications and work-based training options that will help carers to upskill and progress in their career, including apprenticeships from Level 2 – 5. It will be at the employer's/care worker's discretion as to the learning they choose to access. Employees who have completed the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will be able to progress onto other types of learning and qualifications in the Care Workforce Pathway. Including the Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care. To find out more about the new [Care Workforce Pathway](#).

**To improve consistent delivery and portability** – The introduction of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate aims to ensure better consistency in portability and standardisation in how the current standards are delivered, achieved, and assessed.

**Digital Skills** – The department have highlighted Digital Skills as a key learning and development priority for care workers. The use of digital technologies has been referred to throughout the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification criteria and assessment guidance where relevant.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Level 2 landscape**

#### **How does the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate fit in with the existing level 2 options?**

The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate sits alongside existing Level 2 options such as the Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship and Diploma in Care. We would not expect an individual to complete more than one of these level 2 options and it is up to each employer and learner to decide which option is best for them.

#### **What is the difference between this qualification, the diploma and apprenticeship?**

A learner must be 19+ to enrol and receive funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate. This is because this qualification does not contain any English and Maths and may be most suitable for those with more life experience who need less support with these skills.

It is important for younger learners, and in line with Department for Education policy, to continue the study of English and Maths until aged 19. The Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship (including the Level 2 Diploma), available to individuals from 16+, is a more suitable learning programme for this group and equips the under 19 workforce with skills they need for the future.

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.

#### **Are the Level 2 Adult Care Apprenticeship and Diploma in Care being revised?**

The Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship should continue to be delivered by Awarding Organisations and Training Providers in its current form. The Level 2 apprenticeship may be revised in the future, and we are collaborating with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and Department for Education as they progress this work.

### **Learning and Assessment**

#### **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 and 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.

### **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 will 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.

### **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.

## **Funding**

### **Who will be eligible for funding?**

Funding is available for non-regulated members of the adult social care workforce in England, including deputy and Care Quality Commission registered managers and agency staff. There are no restrictions on the number of hours that care staff must be contracted for to be eligible for this support.

To qualify for The Learning and Development Support Scheme, individuals must be employed by an employer (including local authorities) which meets all of the following criteria:

- Provide an adult social care service
- Directly employ care staff in England (please see the grant determination letter for a definition of 'direct employment')
- Have completed the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS)

### **Is internal training eligible for funding?**

Training delivered in-house is not eligible for LDSS funding, even if the employer is an accredited learning centre. ASC employers will only be able to claim reimbursement for eligible courses and qualifications that are delivered by an external training provider. This is due to the evidence required when submitting claims. We will explore expanding this scope in future iterations of the service.

### **How do I access the funding?**

- The Department of Health and Social Care is providing funding for learning and development for non-regulated care staff in England via the Learning and Development Support Scheme
- Eligible employers can claim funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate on behalf of eligible care staff for up to £1500 per qualification.
- Full details of how to access the funding and submitting claims from the Learning and Development Support Scheme can be accessed in the guidance here [Learning and Development Support Scheme for the adult social care workforce: a guide for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/learning-and-development-support-scheme-for-the-adult-social-care-workforce-a-guide-for-employers).
- The funding scheme is administered by NHS Business Services Authority (NHS-BSA) on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care.
- Providers must complete an expression of interest survey. After completing the form, eligible employers will be contacted by NHS-BSA to start the onboarding process. This is a phased onboarding process, guided by NHS-BSA. For the first few months, access to the online claims service is only possible via an invitation from NHS-BSA.
- As part of the onboarding process, eligible adult social care providers will be required to create a unique account. In order to create an account, claimants must complete (or have completed) the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) and provide verified bank account details. The ASC-WDS is a free online data collection service run by Skills for Care that covers the adult social care workforce in England.

## **What is the total reimbursement available for the Level 2 Care Certificate Qualification?**

- The reimbursement available per qualification is up to £1500.
- There is no ringfenced funding specifically for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate.
- Full details of how to access the funding and submitting claims from the Learning and Development Support Scheme can be accessed in the guidance: [Learning and Development Support Scheme for the adult social care workforce: a guide for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/learning-and-development-support-scheme-for-the-adult-social-care-workforce-a-guide-for-employers)

## **Induction and Mandatory training**

### **How will the qualification align to other recommendations and developments in the sector?**

Learning outcomes in the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification have 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.

Under the Health and Care Act 2022, CQC-registered providers are required to ensure their staff receive learning disability and autism training appropriate to their role. A code of practice will be issued in due course to guide providers on meeting this requirement. It is expected that all learners undertaking the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification 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.

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

Current delivery of the 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 of Health and Social Care 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 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.

### **What is going to happen to the existing Care Certificate Standards?**

The Department for Health and Social Care 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 to support initial induction training while this work is underway.

### **Qualification delivery – Employers and Training providers**

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

Yes, learning/training providers need to be approved by an AO (who are approved by Ofqual) to deliver the qualification.

#### **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 Awarding Organisation to deliver the qualification. Link to approved Awarding Organisations [here](#).

#### **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 Awarding Organisation (AO) who has approved the centre to deliver the qualification.

Skills for Care will be quality assuring the qualifications submitted by AOs and we require AOs to provide a robust explanation of how they assess and monitor the competency of their approved centres as part of our approval process.

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.

**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.