

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism (Oliver's Training)

Frequently asked questions

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Statutory requirements

What is the legal requirement on learning disability and autism training?

The Health and Care Act 2008, as amended by the [Health and Care Act 2022](#), requires that CQC-registered health and care providers must ensure their staff receive learning disability and autism training appropriate to their role.

The Department of Health and Social Care has now published the [Oliver McGowan Code of Practice](#) to guide providers on how to meet the requirement. The Code of Practice sets out four standards which outline minimum training requirements including: expectations on training content at different levels; that training is co-produced and co-delivered with people with lived experience; and how training should be monitored and evaluated. It also supports providers and their staff to understand their training needs and to identify the right level and content of training to meet those needs.

Who is in scope of the legal requirement?

Service providers registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) must ensure their staff receive training on learning disability and autism appropriate to their role. Whilst the legal requirement only applies to staff working for CQC registered service providers, we would encourage all staff in health and care settings to receive training on learning disability and autism appropriate to their role.

Who is the Code of Practice for?

The Code of Practice is aimed at CQC-registered providers who must comply with the statutory requirement for learning disability and autism training introduced by the Health and Care Act 2022.

The code may also be used by, or be of interest to, the following groups to understand how staff can be best trained to support people with a learning disability and autistic people:

- CQC staff who assess and inspect CQC-registered providers of health and care services on their compliance with the new training requirement
- people who use the services of a registered provider
- health and social care providers who are not CQC registered, for example providers who only deliver autism assessments
- social workers and social care professionals
- commissioners of services
- the general public, including people with a learning disability and/or autistic people and their families
- training providers.

Does the mandatory training requirement on learning disability and autism apply to children's social care staff?

All CQC registered service providers must ensure their staff have training on learning disability and autism at a level appropriate to their role. The mandatory training requirement applies to each person working for a registered provider who carries out [regulated activities](#), covering all health and care staff as well as ancillary staff who may have contact with adults and children who are autistic or have a learning disability. For example, it applies to CQC-registered providers that run healthcare or homecare (domiciliary care) services used by children. The requirement does not apply to providers that are not regulated by CQC, such as children's social care providers regulated solely by Ofsted. The Code of Practice is aimed at CQC-registered providers, who must comply with the legal requirement. Other providers should use the code to understand the optimum way to ensure their staff are trained to care for and support people with a learning disability and autistic people.

How will the CQC use the Code of Practice and what approach will they take to assessing training after the 6 September commencement of the Code?

CQC regulate registered health and social care providers, in line with the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. The Code of Practice, when it commences on 6 September 2025, will constitute guidance and as such will provide explicit information about how the requirements of the regulation can be met. CQC will take the Code of Practice into account when making certain decisions, such as registration requirements and staff training requirements set out in Regulation 18 of the 2014 Regulations.

Registered providers need to be prepared to demonstrate to CQC how their chosen approach meets the requirements of the regulation, using the standards set out in the Code. Providers of regulated activities need to recognise that ensuring their staff have the right level of skills is an important service-user safety issue for people with a learning disability and autistic people. A key element of the Code necessitates providers being assured and able to demonstrate that learning is put into practice, and that the training is robustly quality assured and is delivered in collaboration with people with lived experience.

CQC may use their enforcement powers, or take other action, where they find that a registered provider is not complying with the regulations. If the provider chooses not to follow the standards set out in the Code, they must be able to demonstrate how they are meeting the requirements of regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. The onus will be on the provider to explain its rationale for not following the Code. If this is appropriate, CQC will consider whether a registered provider is still protecting people with a learning disability and autistic people from the risk of inappropriate care or treatment in another, equally effective way. CQC has the power

to take civil enforcement action against a provider who fails to meet the regulatory requirements.

CQC will always take a proportionate approach – there is a legal duty to do so. However, CQC will take action if providers:

- are not in a position to demonstrate they are compliant with the regulation
- have not considered the requirements of the regulation
- have not mitigated the risks of staff not being trained.

Specific queries about CQC's regulatory approach can be sent to enquiries@cqc.org.uk including 'Mandatory training requirement on learning disability and autism / Code of Practice' in the subject line.

How do I know what tier of training my staff need?

The Code of Practice sets out three tiers of training. [Annex A of the Code](#) provides examples for each of the three tiers. It is the employer's responsibility to understand the specific learning needs of their staff and ensure they receive training appropriate to their role.

Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism

What is the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism?

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism (Oliver's Training) is the government's preferred and recommended training package to support CQC-registered providers to meet the statutory requirement for learning disability and autism training. Alternative training packages must meet the four standards set out in the Oliver McGowan Code of Practice.

Oliver's training was trialled in England during 2021 with over 8,000 people. Evidence and learning from the trial of Oliver's Training was used to inform and set the standards contained in the Code, alongside feedback from the consultation on the draft Code.

Oliver's Training covers essential tier 1 and tier 2 capabilities. Tier 1 is for staff requiring a general awareness of the support that people with a learning disability and autistic people may need. Tier 2 is for staff who may need to provide care and support for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

You can find out more about Oliver's Training in section 2 of the [Code](#) and on the programme page: [The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#)

What if staff need more specialist training at Tier 3 level?

Oliver's Training is designed for staff who require training at tier 1 or tier 2 level. Some staff may need additional training at tier 2 level or will need more specialist training at tier 3 level which can be highly variable and differ from person to person, based on their role.

Individual employers have the responsibility to source the appropriate tier 3 training which can be accessed from a diverse range of sources, depending on needs of learners. This might include apprenticeships, vocational or subject-specific training. Examples of further information about the tiers and how they relate to different job roles can be found in Annex A of [the Code](#).

Why does the Code only mention Oliver's Training and not other training packages?

The Code sets out standards to guide providers and ensure that every person receives high quality learning disability and autism training that meets their learning needs.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff receive sufficient training, appropriate to their role. This may include Oliver's Training and / or other training packages which meet the learning needs of their staff and the four standards set out in the Code. Oliver's Training meets the standards set out in the Code and, at the time of publication, is the government's preferred and recommended training package.

Delivery of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism

What support is available for the adult social care sector to deliver Oliver's Training?

Training on learning disability and autism should be seen as an essential part of learning and development at every stage of a person's career in the adult social care sector. This is why all [role categories](#) in the Care Workforce Pathway and learning outcomes in the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate include expectations on learning disability and autism awareness, in line with the legal requirement in the Health and Care Act 2022.

DHSC will be providing funding in Autumn 2025 to support rollout of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training to the adult social care sector, via the same online claims service as the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS). This will operate under the same reimbursement arrangements as currently apply, with training completed between April 2025 and March 2026 eligible for reimbursement.

This funding will be specific to Oliver's Training and separate to the overall LDSS funding already available for other training and qualifications. DHSC will confirm the position beyond March 2026 in due course.

Employers may choose to train their own trainers or work with external training providers, paying an external training provider. Further information is available on the NHS England webpage on Oliver's Training, including FAQs and examples of how the training is being rolled out in practice: [The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](https://hee.nhs.uk/the-oliver-mcgowan-mandatory-training-on-learning-disability-and-autism)

As part of the [Quality Assured Care Learning Service](#), Skills for Care are quality assuring training providers delivering Oliver's Training to the adult social care sector. As part of this, [a bespoke framework](#) was developed alongside experts by experience and employers to address specific delivery considerations for the adult social care sector. Providers of Oliver's Training are required to commit to fair and transparent pricing.

What is being done to ensure the content of Oliver's Training remains up to date and relevant to different staff and settings?

Oliver's Training delivers learning outcomes on both learning disability and autism and provides a foundation for staff across health and social care. The standard learning packages are relevant to all staff from across all health and social care services.

Where appropriate, approved trainers will augment Oliver's Training to make a specific session relevant, context-specific and impactful for attendees. Approved trainers can use service, professional and local examples and case studies to make

the standardised material relevant to their audience. Facilitating trainers bring their knowledge and experience of services, disciplines and findings from the NHS England [LeDeR programme](#). Autistic co-trainers and co-trainers with a learning disability bring their own lived experience, including of interactions with services. There are optional resources within Oliver's Training such as video case studies that trainers can match to the audience. These resources, developed for the health and social care sectors, will be added to over time, in response to feedback and suggestions. Only approved trainers have access to the training resources and have permission to use them.

Is Oliver's Training being evaluated?

The University of Leicester has been commissioned to undertake a long-term independent evaluation study to assess the delivery and impact of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism (Oliver's Training) between 2024-2027.

People with a learning disability, autistic people and their carers will be actively involved at all stages of the research.

The study consists of two parts, the first is a process evaluation looking at delivery of training to the health and adult social care sectors. The second part is an impact evaluation which will assess any changes in attitude, knowledge, skills and behaviour as well as changes in organisational practices and patient outcomes. This will include surveying and interviewing health and social care professionals, people with a learning disability and autistic people, and their families and carers.

Will the delivery of Oliver's Training be accredited?

Yes, NHS England is seeking to appoint an organisation to accredit training providers of The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism. The accreditation body will provide a quality assurance process to enable organisations and individuals to become accredited training providers of Oliver's Training. Accreditation will apply to training for both health and adult social care sectors. When the accreditation body is confirmed, information will be published on the [NHS England webpage for Oliver's Training](#).

In the meantime, Oliver's Training is a standardised training package that needs to be delivered by approved trainers in line with the [delivery model](#) and the [conditions of training](#). Employers and participants can check that trainers delivering the training are approved to deliver Oliver's training by accessing [Oliver's Training approved trainer list](#).

How can I deliver the training in house?

Employers can deliver the training in-house, using trainers trained and approved to deliver Oliver's Training. Lead trainers can train other appropriately experienced people to become approved trainers. Please see NHS England's [The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism web pages](#) or contact your [ICB lead](#) for details about training trainers in your area.

Specific questions on funding for Oliver's Training

What are the eligibility criteria for the funding?

DHSC will be providing funding from Autumn 2025 to support rollout of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training to the adult social care sector in 25/26, via the same online claims service as the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS). This funding will be specific to Oliver's Training, separate to the overall LDSS funding already available for other training and qualifications. Training completed between April 2025 and March 2026 will be eligible for reimbursement.

Current eligibility criteria for the LDSS are available [here](#). Specific details on requirements for Oliver's Training will be set out in due course, including reimbursement rates.

How would I get access to the funding?

DHSC will provide funding for Oliver's Training through the same digital claims platform used for the [Learning and Development Support Scheme](#) (LDSS). Funding available under the LDSS is distributed via an online claims service, delivered by NHS Business Services Authority (BSA). ASC providers will need to have an ASC workforce dataset account to access funding for Oliver's Training.

Further details on how to use the online claims service will follow in Autumn 2025 when the funding becomes available.

Will there be funding beyond 2025/26?

The Department for Health and Social Care will clarify this as soon as possible. Any funding will be subject to Government decisions following the recent Spending Review.

Will there be funding available to cover backfill?

No. The criteria for funding will be consistent with the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England's approach on other training and qualifications for the health and care workforce, which do not reimburse costs of backfill.

Will funding for Oliver's Training require combined claims?

No, Oliver's Training is not classed as a qualification and therefore a combined claims model where 60% is claimed at the start of the qualification and 40% on training completion does not apply.

Oliver's Training will be treated as a training course, meaning that claims for eligible training courses can only be submitted once the training course has been paid for

and completed. These claims must be submitted within 3 months of the training course being completed.