

Approval of the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate against Skills for Care's qualification criteria

Version 1.3 Wave 3: Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification development

This process is valid April 2025 - March 2026

Scope of document

This approval process relates to qualification criteria for:

- **Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate**

Where awarding organisations wish to seek approval for other qualifications, please see our [awarding organisations webpage](#) or contact the National Workforce Development, Capability and Skills team: NWDCS@skillsforcare.org.uk.

Audience

Ofqual regulated awarding organisations planning to develop the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification for adult social care.

Introduction

The process for approving qualifications against Skills for Care criteria was originally introduced to support the transition from the QCF to RQF, in agreement between Skills for Care and the Joint Awarding Body Quality Group for Health and Social Care and Children's Sectors. Approving qualifications against a set criteria supports the quality, consistency and understanding of core qualifications across the adult social care sector. It does not replace the awarding organisations responsibilities to register the qualification with Ofqual.

Positioning

The Care Certificate was introduced in 2015 and was developed jointly by Skills for Care, Health Education England and Skills for Health and is based on 15 standards. The Care Certificate is currently an agreed set of standards that define the

knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors. It is not a recognised qualification.

As set out in the [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform white paper](#), a commitment was made to work with the adult social care sector to review the current Care Certificate delivery model with a view to reviewing its current challenges and future placing within the sector.

During 2022, the DHSC appointed PA Consulting, Skills for Care, and the Social Care Institute of Excellence to achieve the first step of this commitment. Following an extensive discovery and engagement process, an options model was achieved with a clear outcome of a preferred option of the Care Certificate becoming a recognised formal Level 2 Certificate qualification in the adult social care sector.

In March 2023, the DHSC appointed Skills for Care to develop a qualification specification to enable better consistency in portability and standardisation in how the current standards are delivered, achieved, and assessed. DHSC recommended that during this process, content should be developed so that it represented best practice and that it should not deviate significantly from the standards as they already exist. It was also recommended that the process should be highly collaborative, involving representatives from a wide range of stakeholders including awarding organisations, training providers and the adult social care sector.

Skills for Care has now reviewed and drawn from the content of the current Care Certificate to develop a specification that meets the standards of a Level 2 qualification. This document sets out the process for approval for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification against criteria developed by Skills for Care.

We have already carried out Waves 1 and 2 of approvals activity in early in 2024 - 2025. The qualification went live via several approved AOs from 3 June 2024. The DHSC have also provided information about the qualification [here](#).

Contact details

Should an awarding organisation have any questions about the qualification criteria or approval process, please contact gaservices@skillsforcare.org.uk.

Process

The process for awarding organisations to follow to seek approval for a qualification is outlined below.

Step 1: Access qualification criteria

Skills for Care will make criteria available to awarding organisations [via our website](#). All awarding organisations will have access to the criteria simultaneously.

Step 2: Submit intention to proceed

Awarding organisations must notify Skills for Care by email of their intention to proceed in developing the qualification for approval against our criteria prior, this must be prior to 28 February 2026. Timeframes need to be considered to allow for your development of the qualification and the required processes as stated below.

Your intention to proceed should be submitted to gaservices@skillsforcare.org.uk and include the following information:

- awarding organisation name
- qualification title: Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate
- contact details for person responsible for qualification development
- estimated date for submitting your qualification for approval.

Step 3: Advice and guidance

Through your development process, colleagues from Skills for Care's National Workforce Development, Capability and Skills team are available to offer advice and guidance to support you. This includes feedback on sample content, materials or structures. This is designed to highlight any issues at an early point and so maximise the efficiency of the final review process.

Please send sample content to gaservices@skillsforcare.org.uk.

Step 4: Submit qualification for review

When submitting a qualification for review and approval against Skills for Care criteria, please complete a Skills for Care 'mapping template'. This will have been provided when you sent your intention to proceed information. A full qualification specification should also be submitted with the completed 'mapping template'.

To ensure a fair, consistent, and prompt review process the mapping template must be fully completed. If incomplete templates are submitted, further information will be requested, and the review will be placed on-hold until all information is received.

Awarding organisations will need to submit their qualification to Skills for Care for review no later than 28 February 2026. This is to allow a sufficient time period for all steps of the review process to be carried out.

5: Review and decision

Skills for Care will review the qualification against the appropriate criteria and issue a decision no later than 15 working days from receipt of **all documentation** listed in step 4 and providing the intention to proceed was received in good time.

Our response will be either:

- a) **Confirmation that the qualification has been approved.** This means Skills for Care agrees the qualification meets the criteria requirements. Approval includes:
 - Skills for Care's agreement to supply a letter of support to Ofqual for the qualification should this be required - if this is required, please request via gaservices@skillsforcare.org.uk.
 - permission to use a branded logo on qualifications documents, subject to guidelines, this logo will be confirmed prior to launch of the qualification
 - reference to, and promotion of, approved qualifications through Skills for Care literature and webpages.

- b) **Notification that the qualification has not been approved.** This means that Skills for Care has determined the qualification does not meet the criteria requirements. Skills for Care will supply the awarding organisation with an action plan indicating where further work, or amendments, are required.

Once actions have been completed, awarding organisations can re-submit as per Step 4. If actions are required Skills for Care will aim to review within 5 working days.

Cost of approval to awarding organisations

During this phase of the Care Certificate qualification development process, the costs associated with Skills for Care approving Care Certificate qualifications are being supported by the DHSC and awarding organisations will not be charged a fee. Awarding organisations will need to submit their qualification to Skills for Care for review no later than 28 February 2026 to benefit from this. For awarding organisations proceeding after this date an approvals fee may be applicable and this will be subject to on-going review.

Awarding organisations' responsibilities

In accepting Skills for Care's approval for a qualification and in using the agreed logo, the awarding organisation agrees to:

- support approved centres and training providers readiness to deliver the new qualification. This could include supporting existing approved qualification centres, advising those who may be looking to becoming an approved qualification centre or organisations looking to utilise and develop existing assessment skills in the workforce
- inform Skills for Care of any delays, issues or risks relating to the development process
- place the qualification onto the Ofqual register and meet their quality requirements
- agree for Skills for Care to provide updates to the DHSC on the development process and progress achieved with the qualification approval process.

Skills for Care's responsibilities

In approving a qualification Skills for Care agrees to:

- include details of the qualification on our approved qualifications list hosted on our website
- provide the awarding organisation with the agreed approved qualification logo for use on qualification documentation
- keep the approval process under review
- liaise with the DHSC and provide regular updates on feedback from awarding organisations and the progress of the qualification approval process.