

Approval of the Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care qualification against Skills for Care's updated qualification criteria

Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care Diploma qualification development - this process is valid from August 2025

Scope of document

This approval process relates to qualification criteria for:

- Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care

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:

nationalworkforcedevelopmentandskillsteam@skillsforcare.org.uk

Please contact us if you wish to develop this qualification outside of the dates provided in this process.

Audience

Ofqual regulated awarding organisations planning to update or develop the Level 3 Adult Care Diploma.

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

It is expected that updated qualifications will be funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for 2026/2027 via the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) for the adult social care sector workforce. Skills for Care will confirm positioning with transitional arrangements from old to new versions in due course. This qualification aligns to role categories: care or support worker, enhanced care

worker and personal assistant within the [Care workforce pathway for adult social care - GOV.UK](#). At time of final re-development (July 2025) it is understood the qualification will remain included within the expected revised apprenticeship standard-lead adult care worker.

Contact details

Should an awarding organisation have any questions about the qualification criteria or approval process, please contact nationalworkforcedevelopmentandskillsteam@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 updating or developing the qualification for approval against our criteria by 31 Dec 2025.

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

- awarding organisation name
- qualification title (Level 3 Adult Care Diploma)
- 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 nationalworkforcedevelopmentandskillsteam@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 (including mandatory and optional units) and any required documents 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 30 Jan 2026. This is to allow time for our review and any required amendments.

Step 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 nationalworkforcedevelopmentandskillsteam@skillsforcare.org.uk.
 - Permission to use a branded logo on qualifications documents, subject to confirmation AO's have received and read Skills for Care code of conduct for logo use.
 - 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 15 working days.

Cost of approval to awarding organisations

During this phase of the Level 3 Adult Care Diploma development process, the costs associated with Skills for Care approving the Level 3 Adult Care Diploma are being supported by the Department of Health and Social Care (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 30 Jan 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 preparation in readiness to deliver the updated Level 3 Adult Care Diploma. This could include supporting existing approved qualification centres and advising those who may be looking to becoming an approved qualification centre.
- 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.
- Launch the qualification no earlier than 1st April 2026 (operational start date).
- Subject to confirmation the individual AO has received, understood and read Skills for Care code of conduct for logo use.
- Support centres to deliver the qualification in line with the associated assessment principles and expected models of delivery.
- 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.
- Liaise with the DHSC and provide confirmation of approval to trigger funding continuation or new eligibility on the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) for the adult social care sector workforce for 2026/2027.
- Provide the awarding organisation with agreed approved qualification logo use and guidance for use on the qualification.
- 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.