



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# **Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate: Frequently Asked Questions**

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## Overview

The Care Certificate Standards define the knowledge and skills expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors. They are made up of the 15 minimum standards that should be covered if you are 'new to care' and should form part of a robust induction programme.

In April 2023 the government published the plan 'Next Steps to put People at the Heart of Care'. This sets out plans to provide the workforce with more support to develop and progress within their careers and improve the quality, safety and personalisation of care. Alongside other investments we committed to funding for a new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification. The publication of this specification is to support the delivery of this qualification.

The new Level 2 qualification is being introduced to the sector to improve portability and reduce the need for repeat training and assessment when people move roles. This supports our aim of supporting career progression and development, including through our wider apprenticeship and qualifications offer; and recognising adult social care as a profession.

Skills for Care was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to develop a specification for the development of the new Care Certificate qualification based on the existing Care Certificate standards.

Development of the specification has been done in collaboration with the sector through a series of focus groups and meetings with stakeholders. The specification is now available for awarding organisations to see on Skills for Care's website for use to develop Care Certificate qualifications.

Government will be providing up to £53.91m of funding support for 37,000 individuals in particular 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 forms part of the £250m investment announced in Next Steps to put People at the Heart of Care; and will sit alongside our existing training pathways, including apprenticeships at Levels 2-5. The investment is dependent on demand for Care Certificate places.

# Background

## 1. 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 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 is developing 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 qualification will not be mandatory at the moment, and we are currently reviewing the future placing of the Care Certificate standards. 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.

## 2. What is happening to the future of the Diploma?

- We are waiting to meet with the Trailblazer group who will be deciding about the future of the L2 apprenticeship and Diploma.

# Quality Assurance Process

## 3. Will Awarding Organisations be expected to submit their qualifications to government or another third party for approval?

- Awarding Organisations will need to submit their developed qualification, along with supporting documentation, to Skills for Care for approval. The submission should include detailed documentation of the qualification's design, content, assessment methods and any other relevant information.

- Awarding Organisations should follow the Skills for Care approval process and timelines to ensure the submission and review process can be carried out effectively and in a timely manner.
- Skills for Care will confirm receipt of submitted qualifications and keep individual Awarding Organisations updated with the outcome of the process. Once Skills for Care have confirmed approval, Awarding Organisations will need to upload their qualifications to Ofqual for final approval.

**4. How will the qualification be assessed; will this be in line with existing assessment principles within the sector?**

- The Care Certificate qualification will be assessed in accordance with the Skills for Care & Development assessment principles (2017).

**5. Do all AOs need to call the qualification the same thing? Can Ofqual confirm that the name Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is acceptable?**

- Ofqual have confirmed the qualification name is approved, citing the following:

“Thanks for your patience – I’ve double-checked with our Legal team, and they’ve assured me that the name you propose ‘AO name Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate’ is acceptable and complies with our General Conditions.

It’s worth noting that we don’t specify the order of the AO-name, level, size and subject, just that the title must include all those points, which your proposal does.”

**6. Will the approval process require information about quality assurance processes and other information required by AOs in order to meet the Ofqual condition of recognition?**

- We require details around assessment and the internal quality assurance arrangements for the qualification e.g. for assessment methodology, total times, launch dates and support for learners. There are a range of questions around those points in the mapping document for you to complete which will support the process you carry out to register the qualification.

**7. TQT is stipulated - are we all deciding our own GLH?**

- In the specification we have provided recommended credit values for individual units, this is based on 30-36 credit range for a certificate level qual and maximum TQT 369 hrs, but you can modify that. Therefore, TQT and GLH will need by finalised within your development process and confirmed within the mapping document you submit.

## **8. Can we share the criteria with our centres?**

- Yes, you can share with your centres.

## **9. When will the mapping documents be available to AOs?**

- AOs need to express to Skills for Care via e-mail your intention to proceed and your estimated date for submission of your qualification based on that information They will then send the mapping document back to you.

# **Funding**

## **10. Will the qualification be fully funded by government?**

- Government will be providing up to £53.91m of funding support for 37,000 individuals towards Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualifications from the 24/25 financial year.
- 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. We will provide more information on contribution per place in due course.

## **11. 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.
- Eligibility for undertaking the qualification is restricted to individuals aged 19+ 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.

# General questions

## **12. What size qualification will it be?**

- The new Adult Social Care Certificate qualification is a Level 2 'Certificate' and the qualifications developed by Awarding Organisations will need to be between 30 – 36 credits.

## **13. How long is it expected to take a member of staff to complete?**

- The specification sets out that the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification will require a total of up to 369 hours of learning. We would expect this to take someone around 6 – 8 months to complete, which will include on-going periods of on the job learning, formal assessment, any required training and workplace supervision. Each care worker is different, and it may take some people more or less time, depending on their individual circumstances.

## **14. Will the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification be mandatory?**

- It is not the Department's intention to make the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certification qualification mandatory at the moment.
- Over time we want this to become the baseline standard for all new care workers to work towards when they join the profession.

## **15. Will the new level 2 Adult Social 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 Care Certificate qualifications will only be available to staff working in an adult social care setting.
- Healthcare staff can choose to access the qualification if they want to, but this will need to be funded by their employer.
- The Department previously convened a Care Certificate Governance Group to discuss the interactions between the two. It is reviewing future governance arrangements with external stakeholders and will continue to engage with health colleagues on this point.

## **16. Have you commissioned any learning resources to support the delivery of the qualification.**

- No, the department has not commissioned any learning resources.

# Timelines for Delivery

## **17. When does the government want Awarding Organisations to have qualifications ready by? What support is it putting in place to help Awarding Organisations meet these timelines?**

- The specification for the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification has now been published and is available to access on Skills for Care's website.
- Between January and June 2024, the Department expects:
  - Awarding Organisations to create Care Certificate qualifications and submit qualifications for approval to verify they meet the specification. The approvals process document, available alongside the specification on Skills for Care's website sets out the detailed delivery timeline and deadlines for the qualification's approvals process.
  - The specifications are submitted to Ofqual for approval.
  - Learning providers to use the qualification specification to develop updated training courses before these are rolled out to the sector.
- The Department will be providing funding to Skills for Care to manage the first cohort of approvals for Awarding Organisations. This means Awarding Organisations will not need to pay a fee to Skills for Care for their qualification to be approved. Awarding Organisations will need to follow the Skills for Care approval process and submit their draft qualifications no later than 24 April 2024.
- The Department is interested in any other actions government could take to support Awarding Organisations to meet this delivery timeline.

## **18. When does the government expect Training Providers to have developed new and updated courses by?**

- The specification for the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification has now been published and available to access on Skills for Care's website.
- It is our expectation that Awarding Organisations will use the new specification to develop their own qualifications as well as share a draft with qualification centres and those who provide training for the sector to enable early preparation. We are encouraging Awarding Organisations to prioritise development of these qualifications between January 2024 and April 2024 so that those providing training associated with



the Care Certificate standards have sufficient time to review and develop course materials before places are made available in June 2024.

**19. Has the content of the Care Certificate qualification been updated?**

- The specification for the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification is based on the existing Care Certificate standards. The structure and format have not changed, but the specification includes small changes to ensure people in care roles have current baseline skills and knowledge required to support people well and deliver their job.

**20. Will the qualification become a requirement through adult social care commissioning contracts?**

- It is not the Department's intention to make the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certification qualification mandatory at the moment.
- Over time we want the Care Certificate to become the baseline standard for all new care workers to work towards when they join the profession.

**21. Can we have confirmation that this is the date for all AOs to launch. With there being a window for approvals I want to make sure we're saying no AO can launch before 3 June?**

- We can confirm the launch the date for all AOs is 3rd June 2024 and no one can launch before this.

**22. When can we start advertising the qualification?**

- All AOs must launch to Training Providers for delivery to learners on the 3rd June 2024 but are free to promote the qualification from now.

**23. Is there flex on 3rd June date?**

- No, 3rd June is the launch date for the qualification. There will be a second wave of approvals and launches following this first iteration.

## **Interaction with Other Training**

**24. 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 level 2 Adult Social 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, including the legal requirement for staff in CQC-regulated settings to receive learning disability and autism training appropriate for their role.
- Learning Outcomes 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.
- 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 this qualification.

**25. How will the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification support progression in the sector and how will it align with other Level 2 qualifications or apprenticeships in the sector?**

- The new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification will provide a baseline of knowledge and skills that will be transferable across the sector. By making the Care Certificate a qualification the Department is ensuring that training and assessment around the Care Certificate standards is delivered consistently and is portable.
- Our vision is for the new Level 2 Adult Care Certificate qualification to become the baseline standard in the sector that you work towards when joining the workforce. Beyond this, 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/care worker discretion what they choose to access. The completion of any Level 2 learning programme will allow an individual to progress onto a Level 3 option, such as the Level 3 Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship.

- The Department is working closely with the Department for Education, IfATE and key organisations in the social care sector to monitor take up initially and explore opportunities to align for when the qualification is available from June 2024. This includes how the new level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification is reflected in the government's new Care Workforce Pathway.
- The Department is also working to align the apprenticeship reviews with the development of the Care Workforce Pathway to ensure that high-quality apprenticeships meet the skills needs of social care employers and provide people of all ages and backgrounds with the opportunity to benefit.

## Portability

### **26. How do you intend to make the new qualification portable and reduce the need for repeat training?**

- We know that staff are not always able to evidence their training when moving between different employers in the sector, and that sometimes staff do not have access to proof of completion of their training.
- We know that training providers want to be able to share their certification with employers and employees and to ensure that training stays with staff through their careers. We also know the cost of staff having to repeat training they have already taken when working for another employer.
- The Department is developing skills record for the adult social care sector, that will allow care workers to keep their own verified record of training, allow employers to check the training and development of their staff and allow training and learning providers to use the record to share their certification of training.
- We would like to work with awarding organisations and training providers during the development of the level 2 Adult Social care certificate qualification to understand how we can work together on how we can best deliver the skills record and help ensure the portability of the care certificate qualification.

### **27. What is the skills record?**

- In People at the Heart of Care the department announced that the Care Workforce Pathway (described there as, Knowledge and Skills framework and career structure) would be accompanied by a skills record to hold records of portable care certificates and other types of formal and informal learning and development.

- The skills record will help to address issues of portability of staff training and development. We will embed this as a function in a new digital care hub for the workforce. It will provide a permanent and verifiable record of skills, behaviours and achievements that can be shared with new or potential employers.
- We expect to see the skills record enter public testing in 2024 and would like to work together on how we can best deliver the skills record and help ensure the portability of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification.

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