

Quality Standards for adult social care training provision

Department for Health and Social Care foreword

The government is fully committed to a professional, well-supported social care workforce, and is committed to enhancing skills for staff working in social care. It is of critical importance that the learning, development and training is of outstanding quality, relevant and accessible.

Care providers currently have to replace almost a third of their workers each year due to staff leaving their jobs. High turnover worsens the quality of care. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is therefore investing in retention through better workforce training, recognition, and career progression, and has:

- Published a [new career structure for care and support workers](#) which identifies the values, skills, knowledge, behaviours and recommended learning and development for different roles so that all staff can develop in their careers and can be recognised for their experience and skills.
- Created a new qualification, the [Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate](#). This has been developed from the Care Certificate standards, and is accredited, portable and requires assessment of skills. It has been designed to ensure people in direct care roles have the most up-to-date knowledge and baseline skills required to provide support to people and succeed in their roles.
- Launched the new [Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme](#) through which eligible employers can claim varying levels of reimbursement for spend on upskilling the adult social care workforce in England.

This programme of work centres on identifying, providing, and funding better learning and development for the workforce. With the significant level of public investment being made by the government it is important to ensure that learning and development is of good quality, easily accessible, meets the needs of the workforce and users of care services, and is trusted by the sector.

Therefore, DHSC has contracted Skills for Care to develop and launch the new Quality Assured Care Learning Service. This service will review the quality of individual courses and qualifications delivered by training providers in the sector and quality assure those which meet a high standard and deliver good learning outcomes. The intention of the service is to ensure that the sector can easily identify good quality learning and development and trust that courses and qualifications identified and funded by the government meet their needs.

Additionally, as part of this service, Skills for Care will be developing and launching a quality assurance process for delivery of The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism ('Oliver's Training') within the adult social care sector. From 1 July 2022, the Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a requirement on CQC-registered providers to ensure their staff receive training on learning disability and autism, appropriate to their role. This training is an important way to ensure staff have the right knowledge and skills to provide safe and compassionate care for people with a learning disability and autistic people and to improve outcomes for this population. The commitment to deliver Oliver's Training and supporting the adult social care sector remains. We want this training to be an essential part of the learning journey for the adult social care workforce which is why the DHSC has embedded it within plans such as the Care Workforce Pathway and the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate.

The service is funded by DHSC and there is no cost to training providers to apply for quality assurance. Applicants will be provided with both guidance and support from Skills for Care. Quality assurance will result in specific courses and qualifications being:

- Provided with a Quality Assured Care Learning Mark that can be used in promotion materials for the course or qualification.
- Recommended to DHSC for inclusion in the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme.
- Linked to relevant role categories and learning outcomes in the Care Workforce Pathway as recommended learning.

The service will be open to all training providers who meet the application and eligibility criteria. Initially applications will be open to training providers who deliver courses and qualifications eligible for funding from the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme.

Over time, it is the government's ambition that all learning and development identified or funded through the Learning and Development Support Scheme will be quality assured through this Quality Assured Care Learning Service. However, we recognise that this represents a significant change for the sector and will take time to

achieve, therefore quality assurance of training provider's courses and qualification will occur in phases.

- **Phase one**

During the 2024 – 2025 financial year training providers will be able to apply to be quality assured. Employers will be able to claim funding for courses and qualifications eligible for funding from the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme that have not been quality assured.

- **Phase two**

In the 2025 – 2026 financial year courses and qualifications delivered by training providers that have been quality assured will be identified as recommended options within the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme and Care Workforce Pathway for the sector. Employers will be able to claim funding for courses and qualifications eligible for funding from the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme that are not quality assured.

- **Phase three**

In the 2026 – 2027 financial year only courses and qualifications delivered by training providers that have been quality assured will be eligible for funding. Employers will not be able to claim funding for courses and qualifications identified in the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme that are not quality assured.

The quality assurance process will remain open to new and returning applicants throughout each phase.

The timings of the phases above are indicative. The timings of phases two and three are subject to the successful completion of phase one. For example, the Department of Health and Social Care would need to be assured there was sufficient capacity amongst quality-assured training providers to meet the needs of the sector before moving to a position where employers will not be able to claim for funding for courses and qualifications identified in the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme that are not quality assured.

Please note: The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism is NOT currently aligned to the LDSS and becoming quality assured through the QACL Service is not a route to funding.

The purpose of quality-assuring Oliver's training is to ensure that there is a list of quality-assured training providers who can demonstrate they can deliver Oliver's Training to the ASC workforce against a bespoke framework. This will contribute towards supporting employers to make informed decisions when commissioning

Oliver's Training, improving the quality of training offered and access to and uptake of training within the ASC sector

Context

The Quality Standards are a bespoke measure of quality learning and development for the adult social care workforce. They are designed to set a benchmark for quality training delivery and ensure that training identified, recommended, and funded by the government is of good quality and meets the needs of the sector whilst supporting employers to make informed choices.

Training providers applying to the scheme will have to provide evidence which meets the Quality Standards designed for all training providers delivering to the adult social care sector, as well as providing evidence for the Quality Standards related to specific accredited qualification(s) if applicable.

All training providers applying to have their courses quality assured will be asked to provide evidence to meet the following nine Quality Standards.

1. Organisational values align to the values of the social care sector: Kind, compassionate and empathetic; Honest, trustworthy and reliable; Respect; Courageous and principled; See the whole person; Flexible, open and learning; Proud and positive. They are actively implemented and upheld.
2. Policies and practices which support equality, diversity and inclusion within learning provision are in place and are actively implemented and monitored.
3. Organisational quality assurance processes are in place, are actively implemented and monitored and lead to quality improvement.
4. Staff members and associates receive feedback, support and developmental opportunities to improve their practice and ensure their subject and sector knowledge remains current.
5. Learning offers are shaped by robust analysis of customer and sector needs to determine key requirements and learning outcomes.
6. Robust initial assessments of learners are carried out to understand the learners' aspirations and needs to determine the most appropriate course of learning and the individualised support required to achieve that learning.
7. All learners are provided with information, advice, and guidance to support further learning and development, proportionate to the programme of learning undertaken.

8. The employer is actively engaged in the learner journey where appropriate to ensure learning is supported and embedded in the workplace to improve the quality of care delivered.
9. Learner and commissioner satisfaction is regularly measured, monitored and acted upon to improve customer experiences.

Training providers who are applying with regards to their delivery of accredited qualifications will be asked to provide evidence to meet the following Quality Standard.

1. External Quality Assurance reports, relevant to a range of adult social care qualifications, demonstrate they meet the awarding organisation's standards.

If, after reading the guidance and completing the self-assessment you think your organisation is eligible to apply and can meet the Quality Standards, please [complete your application](#).