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

Frequently asked questions

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Please note that this FAQ document covers Oliver's Training only. It does not specifically address the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) and eligible training courses and qualifications, which is funded by a separate LDSS pot of money. For more information about LDSS, please refer to the relevant FAQs.

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 all Care Quality Commission (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 published the Oliver McGowan Code of Practice to guide providers on how to meet this legal 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?

Providers registered with the 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 health and care providers, all staff in health and care settings are encouraged 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 of Practice may also be useful to the following groups, helping them understand how staff can be 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, and
- training providers.

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

All CQC-registered 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.

Does the mandatory training requirement on learning disability and autism apply to local authorities?

All CQC-registered 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, including where this is carried out by a local authority.

Does the mandatory training requirement on learning disability and autism apply to Shared Lives carers?

The statutory learning disability and autism requirement introduced by the Health and Care Act 2022 applies to CQC-registered health and care providers. Shared Lives carers are treated as employees of the provider of the scheme and therefore do not need to register with the CQC. However, we encourage all Shared Live carers to ensure they are receiving appropriate training to support them in providing support for people with a learning disability and autistic people, and to refer to the Core Capabilities Frameworks on learning disability and autism to help assess their learning needs.

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 sets out illustrative examples of roles mapped to the three tiers to help guide providers.

These examples are not designed to be all encompassing or prescriptive, given the diverse roles and settings within the health and social care sector.

It is the employer's responsibility to understand the specific learning needs of their staff and ensure they receive training appropriate to their role. Providers should be prepared to demonstrate to the CQC how their chosen approach meets regulations and supports staff to competently deliver services that meet people's specific needs.

How will the CQC use the Code of Practice?

The CQC regulates 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 provides guidance on how the requirements of the regulation can be met.

The 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 the CQC how their chosen approach meets the requirements of the regulations, using the standards set out in the Code of Practice. 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 of Practice 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.

The 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 of Practice, 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 of Practice.

If this is appropriate, the 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. The CQC has the power to take civil enforcement action against a provider who fails to meet the regulatory requirements.

More information is available on the CQC website.

Specific queries about the 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.

What is the expected timeline for providers to meet the training requirement?

The regulation was amended in 2022 and the requirement for staff to be trained has existed since then. There is no lead in time within the legislation.

CQC inspectors can be expected to ask about the training that providers have in place and plans for future training in order to build a picture of how the service is operating in relation to the regulation. The CQC will always take a proportionate approach – there is a legal duty to do so. However, the 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.

Does the CQC consider the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training as the only training that meets the mandatory training requirement?

The CQC regulates 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. In line with the requirement in legislation, the CQC does not specify a preference for any specific training package.

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training is the government's preferred package. The CQC recognises the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training as a good practice example; however, it is for providers to be assured that the training they provide their staff meets the requirements of the regulation and to provide the CQC with evidence of such.

Further information is available on the CQC website.

How frequently are staff required to complete training?

The Code of Practice sets out that providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff undertake training on learning disability and autism at least every 3 years or more regularly if a member of staff requires it. This may be, for instance, if a staff member's role or responsibilities change or to address an identified learning need. It is the responsibility of providers to identify if staff need to access training more regularly than 3 years and to support them to access it.

Is there refresher training available, or is the expectation that the full training needs to be completed again?

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism is designed to be retaken at least every three years, or more regularly, where needed. There is currently no separate approved refresher package. Therefore, under the current Code of Practice, staff should repeat the full relevant Tier 1 or Tier 2 training at the three-year point.

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 on learning disability and autism. 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 of Practice, alongside feedback from the consultation on the draft Code of Practice.

Oliver's Training covers capabilities within tier 1 and tier 2. 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 of Practice and on the NHS England website.

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 of Practice.

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

The Code of Practice 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 of Practice.

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 (L2ASCC) qualification include expectations on learning disability and autism awareness, in line with the legal requirement in the Health and Care Act 2022.

To support rollout of Oliver's Training, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) provides funding 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 2026 and March 2027 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.**

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 website on Oliver's Training, including FAQs and examples of how the training is being rolled out in practice.

As part of the Quality Assured Care Learning Service, Skills for Care is quality assuring training providers delivering Oliver's Training to the adult social care sector and a list of quality-assured training providers is available (updated on a fortnightly basis). 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 on the accreditation scheme and when it will be available will be communicated.

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.

Oliver's Training was independently evaluated at pilot stage. There is also a long-term independent evaluation underway now, led by the University of Leicester.

What trainers are needed to deliver the interactive elements of Oliver's Training and how can they be supported?

Delivery of Part 2 of both tiers of Oliver's Training requires a trio of trainers – a lead trainer, an autistic trainer, and a trainer with a learning disability. All trainers will need to complete an official training programme called 'Train the Trainer', after which they are approved to deliver Oliver's Training and are added to the approved trainer list on the NHS England website.

There are training providers who offer this service and can be found online. You may also find others in your area through your Integrated Care System (ICS), contact details are available on the Express an Interest page of the NHS England website.

Further information and FAQs on delivery of Oliver's Training is available on the NHS England website. This includes resources for employers to support recruiting, involving and supporting people with lived experience to deliver Oliver's Training.

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. More information is available on the NHS England website or contact your ICB lead for details about training trainers in your area.

What training is expected of a learner completing the Care Certificate standards?

Learning outcomes for the Care Certificate standards include standards on awareness of learning disability and autism, working in a person-centred way, and communication. It is expected that learners undertaking and achieving the Care Certificate standards will have attended training that meets the standards in the Code of Practice on statutory learning disability and autism training. Please see Question 21 of the Care Certificate standards FAQs for further information.

What training is expected of a learner completing the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate (L2ASCC) qualification?

Learning outcomes for the L2ASCC qualification include units on awareness of learning disability and autism, working in a person-centred way, and communication. Achievement of the qualification does not meet the standards in the Code of Practice on statutory learning disability and autism training. It is expected that learners undertaking the qualification will have attended training that meets the standards in

the Code of Practice to provide them with the underpinning knowledge they need to achieve the qualification in their practice.

What is the difference between NHS England's approved list of trainers, their training provider list and Skills for Care's list of quality assured training providers on their website?

The NHS England website includes two sets of information:

- The Oliver's Training approved trainer list is a list of approved trainers. These are people who have been trained to deliver Oliver's Training. Anyone who is not on this list is not approved to deliver Oliver's Training.
- The Oliver's Training training provider list contains the contact details of training providers who have a team of trainers approved to deliver Oliver's Training. This list is by no means complete and information on training providers is readily available online.

Skills for Care's quality assured Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training providers are those training providers that have been quality assured through the Quality Assured Care Learning Service to deliver Oliver's Training. A list of quality-assured training providers is available on the website (updated on a fortnightly basis).

Specific questions on funding for Oliver's Training

What are the eligibility criteria for the funding?

In addition to the existing Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) eligibility criteria, additional criteria apply for Oliver's Training. Claims can only be made for staff working within CQC-registered adult social care services (including where this is a local authority).

Unlike other LDSS courses, claims for Oliver's Training can be made for all staff (regulated and non-regulated). Further information can be found in the LDSS guidance document and Grant Determination Letter 2026/27.

How can I access funding?

You can access the funding via the same digital claims platform used for the LDSS. Funding available under the LDSS is distributed via an online claims service, administered by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA).

Adult social care (ASC) providers need to have an up-to-date Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) account to access funding for Oliver's Training.

How can I get access to the LDSS platform?

You will need to complete the LDSS onboarding form. Once this form has been submitted, NHSBSA will contact you as soon as possible to book an onboarding

appointment. NHSBSA generally aims to reach out within two weeks, but times may vary according to demand.

Will there be funding beyond 2026/27?

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

What are the reimbursement rates?

The below are maximum reimbursement amounts for training courses paid for between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027.

Procured training (when an ASC provider registered with the CQC pays an external company to deliver Oliver's Training with costs charged per staff member completing the course).

- Tier 1 – £25.00
- Tier 2 - £90.00

In-house training (when a trainer is employed by an ASC provider registered with the CQC to internally deliver a session of Oliver's Training to its staff).

- Tier 1 - £12.50
- Tier 2 - £50.00

What is the maximum funding that an organisation can claim?

The claimant solely, or in combination with any, or all, of its other parent organisations or subsidiaries, cannot submit claims for more than £25,000 total reimbursement within 2026/27.

Information on all requirements for the funding is set out in the LDSS Grant Determination Letter 2026/27.

What are the evidence requirements to make a claim?

All claims for Oliver's Training require a certificate of course completion and courses must have been delivered by an approved trainer as listed on NHS England's website.

In addition, claims must be supported by evidence of prior payment to training providers for which reimbursement is being sought. The only exception to this is in-

house claims for Oliver's Training where only a certificate of course completion is required to submit a claim.

Further information can be found in the LDSS guidance document and Grant Determination Letter 2026/27.

What should I do if I don't have a certificate of completion?

Claims for Oliver's Training require a certificate of course completion. If you do not have a certificate, please contact the trainer who delivered the course and ask for a certificate to be issued for each staff member that has completed training.

Can the funding be used for training other than Oliver's Training?

No, this funding is only being provided to reimburse Oliver's Training as it is the government's recommended training package for CQC-registered providers on learning disability and autism, in line with the statutory requirement on learning disability and autism training (Health and Care Act 2022).

There are no plans to extend this funding to other courses at this stage, or to providers not registered with the CQC. Providers may choose to undertake an alternative training package, which would need to meet expectations set out in the Oliver McGowan Code of Practice. The CQC has guidance on how they assess the statutory requirement and what they expect from providers.

How much total funding is available and what happens if the funding runs out?

Total funding available for direct reimbursement of Oliver's Training to the ASC sector is £11.98m for 2026/27. Funding is limited and available on a first come, first served basis, so it is advised to submit claims as soon as possible.

Claims for training completed and paid for within the 2026/27 financial year should be submitted by 11:59pm on 31 March 2027. Claims submitted after this point will be considered on an exceptional case-by-case basis.

Funding for Oliver's Training is separate and ring-fenced from other eligible LDSS course claims. If funding for Oliver's Training is exhausted, no further claims will be reimbursed. NHSBSA will share reminders about the claims deadline for Oliver's Training and will also share communications if the funding pot is running low.

Can the funding be used for other costs incurred by Oliver's Training?

No, the funding is only to cover the delivery of Oliver's Training courses. Travel costs and/or other expenses to support the courses are not reimbursable. The only exception is in-house claims for Tier 2 of Oliver's Training where travel costs are included within the reimbursement rate and may be claimed accordingly.

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, like it does for eligible LDSS qualifications.

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.

Why do I have to submit each claim individually?

The digital service used by NHSBSA is still being developed, with continuous improvement work ongoing, including the ability to add multiple learners per claim.

When do I need to submit claims by?

In 2026/27, claims for training completed and paid for within the same financial year can be submitted at any time up to 11:59pm on 31 March 2027.

Funding for claims for Oliver's Training is available on a first come, first served basis, so it is advised to submit claims as soon as possible.

Can I submit a back dated claim for Oliver's Training?

In 2026/27, a 3-month claims window applies for Oliver's Training, meaning claims must be submitted within 3 months of course completion to be reimbursed.

For the 2025 to 2026 financial year, claims submitted for Oliver's Training after 20 March 2026 will be considered on an exceptional case-by-case basis.

Does the funding cover Train the Trainer?

No, the funding available in 2026/27 does not cover the Train the Trainer training required to train new trainers of Oliver's Training. If the position changes, this will be communicated as soon as possible.

Does the funding cover alternative training beyond Oliver's Training?

Funding is only being provided for Oliver's Training as it is the government's recommended package. Providers may choose to undertake an alternative training package to meet the statutory training requirement, and which meets expectations set out in the Code of Practice; however, this training would not be in scope of the 2026/27 funding pot for Oliver's Training.

Does the funding cover refresher training beyond Oliver's Training?

The Code of Practice states that registered providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff undertake training on learning disability and autism at least every three years.

Funding to support delivery of Oliver's Training in adult social care services is available through the Learning and Development Support Scheme online claims platform. Subject to the scheme's eligibility criteria and funding being available at the time training is undertaken, providers may submit claims for subsequent completions of the training in line with the requirement set out in the Code of Practice.

Are personal assistants eligible for the funding?

No, the funding is only being provided for CQC-registered providers to support them to meet the statutory requirement on learning disability and autism training (Health and Care Act 2022).

Personal assistants may seek funding for training through the Individual Employer Funding scheme administered by NHSBSA.

Will adult social care services not registered with the CQC be eligible for the funding in future?

Funding is only being provided in 2026/27 for CQC-registered providers to support them to meet the statutory requirement on learning disability and autism training (Health and Care Act 2022).

Any future funding will be subject to Government decisions following the Spending Review.

Is there a link between Skills for Care's Quality Assured Care Learning Service and the funding?

At this time, you do not need to use a provider that has been assured through the Quality Assured Care Learning Service to deliver Oliver's Training to be eligible for reimbursement. This may change in the future and using a provider on the list should give you some assurance. There will be clear communication if this position changes.

You will need to ensure that your staff are trained by an approved trainer. You can see if your trainer is approved by looking at Oliver's Training approved trainer list on the NHS England website.