

# Recommendations for CQC-regulated providers

How Skills for Care supports CQC-regulated,  
adult social care services

Updated 2025

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# Introduction

If you want to deliver Good and Outstanding care, and meet Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards, your service needs to have safe and effective staff, including leaders and managers.

Skills for Care helps adult social care employers to get the best from their most valuable resource - their people.

This guide outlines our practical support, including free guides, events and funding opportunities, to help **leaders** and **managers** to **recruit**, **develop** and **lead** their staff, retaining them from entry level right through to senior roles.

It also explains how we can help you to prepare

for CQC assessment and improve your service.

If you're managing a **new regulated service**, we recommend that you read each section to find out how we can support you.

If you're managing an **established service** that's already familiar with Skills for Care, you can skip to the sections that are relevant for you.

If you're managing a **service that's not registered with CQC**, this guide might still be useful as a benchmark of good practice.

Click on the next page to find out how Skills for Care can help.

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## New services



If you want to set up a new care organisation you must contact CQC to see if it needs to be registered. If it does, you need to complete a registration process with them. Find out more on their website at:

[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

Skills for Care has practical resources and tools to help new CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- understand the values, skills, qualifications and experience needed to manage a service

- plan the staff that your service needs
- know how to attract, recruit and induct new staff
- support staff, including planning and delivering the appropriate learning and development.

Visit: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/newservice](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/newservice)

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## Supporting managers



High-quality care and support requires high quality leadership and management, and CQC expects all regulated services to demonstrate that they're well-led.

It's important that your service has capable, confident and compassionate managers who ensure that it meets the required standards – they set the right culture and approach, and should lead by example.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- identify and develop talent
- develop managers through qualifications or leadership programmes, and signpost to funding
- access tools and resources to help managers to deliver a well-led service and lead high performing teams.

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## The role of registered managers

CQC requires all regulated services to have a registered manager that's responsible for ensuring it meets CQC standards.

If your service recruits a **new** registered manager, they'll need to apply to CQC.

If your service **changes** registered managers, the outgoing manager needs to notify CQC in writing, and the incoming manager needs to apply to CQC.

The application can take up to 12 weeks and includes an application form, an interview and references. Use our [checklist](#) to help you to prepare.

Your service must comply with CQC 'Regulation 7: requirements relating to registered managers' which states that providers will have a registered manager that is of good character and is competent to do the role.

Ultimately CQC approves who becomes a registered manager, but there are some examples of good practice that might support an application.

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The Care Workforce Pathway explains what registered managers would need to demonstrate in terms of behaviours, values, skills and experience.

We recommend that all new and aspiring registered managers work towards the 'Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Adult Care'.

CQC might also recognise qualifications under previous systems, including:

- Registered Managers Award (RMA)
- NVQ Level 4 in Leadership and Management for Care Services
- NVQ Level 4 in Health and Social Care
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care
- relevant nursing, physiotherapy, social work or occupational therapy qualification
- degree or masters degree related to social care.

Our practical resources and learning programmes can help you to ensure that registered managers have the skills and knowledge to do their job well, and can access support to run a well-led service.

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## Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Adult Care

This is the current qualification that we'd recommend for adult social care managers or those aspiring to become a manager.

It includes some mandatory units and other optional units, including:

- governance and regulatory processes
- communication
- relationships
- person-centred practice for positive outcomes
- managing self.

Find out more about the qualification at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/RQF](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/RQF)

You could claim funding to cover some of the cost of this qualification via the Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS)

Find out more at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding)

If you are already working in a care management related role, you can do this qualification as part of an apprenticeship.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships)

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## Resources to help

Click on the arrows below to access free guides, tools and resources to support managers.

**Manager Induction Standards**



**Developing new managers and  
deputies**



**Leadership programmes**



**Registered Manager Membership**



**Registered manager webinars**



**People Performance Management  
Toolkit**



**Positive culture toolkit**



**Adult Social Care Workforce Data  
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**Support for nominated individuals**



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## Manager Induction Standards

CQC expects managers to have the right skills, knowledge and experience to run a well-led service.

The Manager Induction Standards set out what a manager needs to know and understand to perform well in their role.

The standards can form part of induction for new managers, or help your service to develop aspiring managers.

Existing managers can also use them to benchmark their own practice and identify any learning and development needs.

Download the standards

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/MIS](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/MIS)

### Introductory modules for managers

This eLearning helps managers to increase their knowledge mapped to the Standards, and reflect on their own work and service.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/eLearning](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/eLearning)

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## Developing new managers and deputies

The loss of a registered manager can have a significant impact on the quality of care and support.

Regulated services need to develop their emerging talent into future managers.

Succession planning is something that the CQC will look for evidence of when assessing Well-led.

Our 'Developing new managers and deputies' online guide sets out how employers can provide opportunities to develop their workforce.

It promotes a blend of development opportunities, programmes and qualifications through a step-by-step approach to career progression.

Shaped around the Care Workforce Pathway, It also includes useful checklists, downloads, practical examples and inspiring interviews with deputies and new managers.

Find out more at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/succession](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/succession)

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## Leadership programmes

Our leadership programmes support managers at all levels to develop their skills and knowledge.

### Lead to succeed

This programme is for aspiring and new managers and deputies.

The programme covers topics such as successful behaviours for leaders and managers, developing a positive culture, effective supervision, leading and managing change, and the inspection process.

Find out more at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/LeadToSucceed](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/LeadToSucceed)

### Well-led

This programme is for registered and operational managers.

Delegates will learn what managers of well-led services do to achieve this standard and how to apply this learning in their own service.

The programme includes practical workshops around knowing yourself, leading a successful service, leading high performing teams and leading beyond the boundaries of your service.

Find out more at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Well-Led](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Well-Led)

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## Moving Up

This programme is for leaders from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic leaders background that already have experience managing a service and want to progress into more senior positions.

The programme focuses on the individual and will give delegates the tools and techniques to help them progress to where they want to be in their career.

You'll reflect on your own leadership skills, strengths and weaknesses, and learn how to improve your confidence, build your personal brand and motivation techniques.

Find out more at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/MovingUp](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/MovingUp)

“One of the best leadership and training programmes I’ve done in my career. We had a safe and supportive space for real conversations and personal development through this leadership and management programme. The support and delivery by the facilitators and programme lead were second to none.”

**Vhenekayi Nyambayo**  
**Moving Up participant 2019/20**

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## Registered Manager Membership

As the sector evolves, it's important that registered managers keep up-to-date with the latest best practice so that they can continue to deliver a well-led service.

Membership gives registered managers access to exclusive resources and support to help them in their role, including:

- a copy of our 'Social care managers' handbook'
- a monthly members newsletter
- the opportunity to become a mentor or be mentored

- access to Good and Outstanding care guide: a 300-page overview of the CQC assessment framework and how to meet it
- discounts on leadership programmes and seminars
- free and exclusive resource when you renew annually.

Membership costs just £35 a year.

Find out more and join now at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/membership](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/membership)

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## Registered manager webinars

Our registered manager webinars cover a range of topics to support managers and their services.

They are delivered to a live audience and recorded for further viewing whenever is convenient for you. They are 45-60 minutes long and most of the webinars are supported with additional information.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/webinars](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/webinars)

## The care exchange podcast

This podcast series includes interviews with frontline managers from different types of services.

Each podcast shares insight, recommendations and good practice into the role of the frontline manager. A great source of inspiration for other managers.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careexchange](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careexchange)

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## People performance management toolkit

Monitoring and managing performance ensures that staff work in line with the required standards.

This toolkit is for managers and shares good practice and guidance around managing staff performance, to help you to develop staff, enhance their performance and address issues before they become a problem.

It also has examples of scenarios, such as what to do if someone's performance is slipping or if they're on extended leave.

The sections include:

- where should I start
- reviewing staff performance
- managing different types of performance
- conversations about performance
- scenarios.

Download the toolkit at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/PPMT](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/PPMT)

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## A positive culture toolkit for adult social care

Workplace culture is the character and personality of your organisation and influences how people behave and feel at work - which is why it's important to have a positive workplace culture.

Our toolkit is for managers and explains what a workplace culture is and how you can develop a positive culture in your organisation.

It explains the key elements of a workplace culture and has activities to help you think about how you can build a positive culture in your service.

Access the toolkit at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/culture](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/culture)



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## Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set

The Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set is an online data collection service for the adult social care sector.

You can use it to record information about your workforce. For example, you can track training records, plan how many workers you need and use it to compare your business to other care providers locally or nationally.

It can also help you to monitor key performance indicators such as turnover, qualifications, demographics and pay.

New and existing users of the service now have access to special offers and discounts across our products including:

- 10% off values-based interviewing and valuable conversations bespoke seminars
- 10% off Registered Manager Membership
- 10% off digital modules for managers and CQC eLearning.

Find out more and register for an account at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ASCWDS](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ASCWDS)

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## Support for nominated individuals

Most regulated providers have a nominated individual (sometimes called a responsible individual) that represents them with CQC. This could be the same person as the registered manager or someone different.

It's important that they have the right values, skills and knowledge to do their role.

We've grouped our resources that are relevant to nominated individuals on our website at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nominatedindividuals](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nominatedindividuals)



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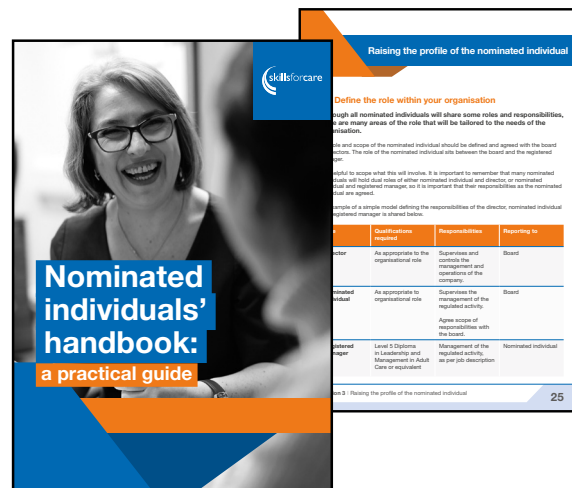
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## Nominated individuals' handbook - a practical guide

Skills for Care has developed a new comprehensive guide aimed at nominated individuals, which provides practical advice and signposts to other resources and support available to help you in your role.

Whether you are new-to-post or an experienced nominated individual, or whether you hold a dual role as registered manager as well, this new resource considers key aspects of your role and shares top tips, so you continue to provide high-quality, person-centred care to the people you support.

Download the free resource  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NIHandbook](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NIHandbook)



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## Recruitment support



CQC expects regulated services to have enough staff, who have the right values and skills, to deliver high quality care and support.

Without it, services struggle to provide people with the safe and effective care that they need and deserve.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- attract new staff
- recruit people with the right values
- understand the right recruitment checks, including DBS checks.

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Click on the arrows below to access free guides, tools and resources to help with recruitment.

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## Supporting your recruitment

By carefully planning your recruitment process, you can keep your turnover rate low. We have produced a range of resources to help.

### Recruiting for values

We have produced films, guidance and downloads to help you recruit people with the right values into your service.

This is supported by programmes that can be directly commissioned to support your values based recruitment.

### Safer recruitment

A good workforce plan will ensure that your service has the right people to meet the changing needs and future opportunities for your business.

Our guidance supports employers to think about safer employment processes from recruitment to retention to managing leavers.

It covers how you plan to recruit, how you select and vet., how you induct, supervise and support etc

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment)

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## Developing your workforce



CQC expects regulated providers to ensure that staff have received appropriate training, supervision and workplace assessment so that they have the right skills and knowledge, and are competent, to carry out their role effectively.

Effective induction, learning and development and ongoing support are some of the ways to do this.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- provide a thorough induction for new staff, that meets the Care Certificate standards and national induction standards.
- plan and deliver ongoing learning and development
- Use the Care Workforce Pathway to ensure your staff have the behaviours, values, skills and experience needed
- learn about funding to pay for qualifications and learning programmes.

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Click on the arrows below to access free guides, tools and resources to help you develop staff.

**Care Workforce Pathway**



**Induction and Care Certificate**



**Guide to learning and development**



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## Care Workforce Pathway

The Care Workforce Pathway details the behaviours, knowledge and skills expected of different roles across adult social care.

It has been informed by consultations with employers about what the sector needs and aims to support the future development of the workforce, supported where possible by Government funding.

The pathway can inform your approach to recruitment and development of frontline carers, managers and others at your service.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/pathway](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/pathway)

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## Induction

Induction gives new staff the opportunity to learn about your organisation and the standards that you expect from them. This ensures that they're safe and competent to work with people who need care and support.

If you employ people with no previous care experience, in addition to covering basic core and mandatory training, you would need to cover the Care Certificate Standards and ideally the new Level 2 qualification.

An effective induction might also include learning about your organisation and its values, core skills and best practice.

You should tailor inductions to people's previous experience – for example experienced workers might only need a light induction, so you might refresh, but not duplicate, previous training and knowledge.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/induction](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/induction)

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## Care Certificate Standards and qualification

The Care Certificate is a set of standards that define the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sector.

It's made up of 15 minimum standards that should be covered for staff that are 'new to care'. First launched in 2015, the Care Certificate Standards were updated in 2025.

The new Level 2 Care Certificate qualification is strongly recommended. It is a more comprehensive process helping to deepen the learning, practical skills and competence of new workers.

The Care Certificate qualification will only need to be competed once and is fully transferable between services. Government funding is available to support adult social care providers to use it.

Visit: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/CareCertificate](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/CareCertificate)

The Care Certificate Standards must be covered if employing anybody in a frontline care role with no previous health or social care experience. This should combine knowledge learning, practical training and workplace assessment of competence.

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## Guide to developing your staff

Ongoing learning and development ensures that staff are confident and competent to do their job well, and keep up-to-date with the latest legislation and best practice.

People learn in different ways and you should provide a range of appropriate learning for your workforce.

Our 'Guide to developing your staff' will help you to plan, deliver and evaluate the learning and development that you provide for your staff.

We've identified four simple steps to create a learning plan for your service including templates to use in the planning process, different ways that you can develop staff and how to evaluate the learning.

View the guide at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/developingstaff](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/developingstaff).

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## Qualifications

Regulated providers are responsible for ensuring that staff have the right skills and knowledge to deliver a safe, effective, responsive, well-led and caring service, and qualifications are a good way of doing this.

Qualifications play an important role in learning and development and there are a wide variety available within adult social care, from diplomas to a range of smaller awards and certificates which are more focused on specific topics.

Diplomas are larger qualifications and enable learners to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to become competent staff. They have optional units allowing the learner to develop in areas of interest or the organisations' priorities.

Awards and certificates are shorter in length and focus on a particular area of specialism. They enable staff to continue their professional development through qualifications.

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## Diplomas in health and social care

We've developed adult social care qualification specifications in partnership with employers and awarding organisations, to ensure that they meet the needs of people who need care and support.

### Level 2 Diploma in Care (RQF)

The level 2 diploma is for care assistants, key workers, healthcare assistants and support workers.

### Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)

The level 3 diploma is for more experienced staff who have added responsibilities and offers them the chance to plan, carry out and evaluate activities.

This qualification is often used to develop new senior care workers, supervisors and internal trainers.

### Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)

This diploma is for workers who have responsibility for assessing performance and the quality of care delivered.

It'll help them to develop further specialist skills and knowledge in their area of responsibility, which enables them to lead in areas such as assessment or enablement.

Find out more about RQF qualifications at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications)

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## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are government-funded, work-based training programmes and can be completed by new or current workers.

They involve on and off-the-job training to help workers to develop job specific skills, get experience and complete qualifications.

There are a number of different apprenticeships to consider.

- Adult Care Worker (level 2)
- Lead Adult Care Worker (level 3)
- Lead Practitioner in Adult Care (level 4)
- Nursing Associate (Level 5)
- Leader in Adult Care (level 5)
- Registered Nurse (Level 6)

Find more guidance and advice about how apprenticeships work and funding at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships)

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## Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS)

Adult social care employers can reclaim funding towards a number of nationally recognised qualifications and learning programmes.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has introduced a new fund to support adult social care employers.

The Learning and Development Support Scheme (LDSS) provides employers to reclaim some initial costs to national qualifications, as well as further funding once completed.

Please note core and mandatory training is not funded and will need to be always covered by the provider.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding)

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## Supervision

Effective supervision can help you to support, empower and motivate staff so that they perform well at work.

It can also help you to check that they understand their role and have the right skills and knowledge to do it, and gives you the opportunity to discuss their performance.

Our 'Effective supervision guide' has practical advice to help you deliver supervisions and explains:

- what supervision is and its' benefits
- what skills supervisors need and how to develop them
- different supervision approaches
- supervision in induction.

Find out more at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/supervision](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/supervision)

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## Wellbeing resources

The CQC will expect caring services to ably support the wellbeing of your staff.

There are a wide range of resources produced by Skills for Care and many organisations to support wellbeing. Our simply Wellbeing Resource Finder can help you locate them.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wellbeing](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wellbeing)



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## Preparing for assessment



CQC assessments are usually unannounced so it's important that you're prepared.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- know what CQC inspectors will look at during an assessment
- access courses, events and checklists to ensure you are prepared
- gather and share the right evidence for assessment.



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## Being prepared for CQC assessment eLearning

This one hour eLearning module is aimed at frontline managers and others helping your service to be prepared for the CQC assessment.

It covers the practical ways you can involve others to help and gather the evidence to demonstrate to the CQC you meet or exceed their expectations.

## Being prepared for CQC assessment seminar

This facilitated seminar is aimed at those unfamiliar with the CQC assessment process and covers how your service can be best prepared. The seminar is delivered periodically throughout the year.

Access these resources at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/prepare](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/prepare)

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## Delivering good and outstanding care



CQC fundamental standards ensure that adult social care services provide the high quality, person-centred care and support that people expect and deserve.

A Good and Outstanding rating indicates that a service meets these standards.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- understand what the CQC will be looking at and what will need to be evidenced
- learn from 'good' and 'outstanding' rated providers about what sets them apart
- access checklists, actions plans and other resources to help you to excel.

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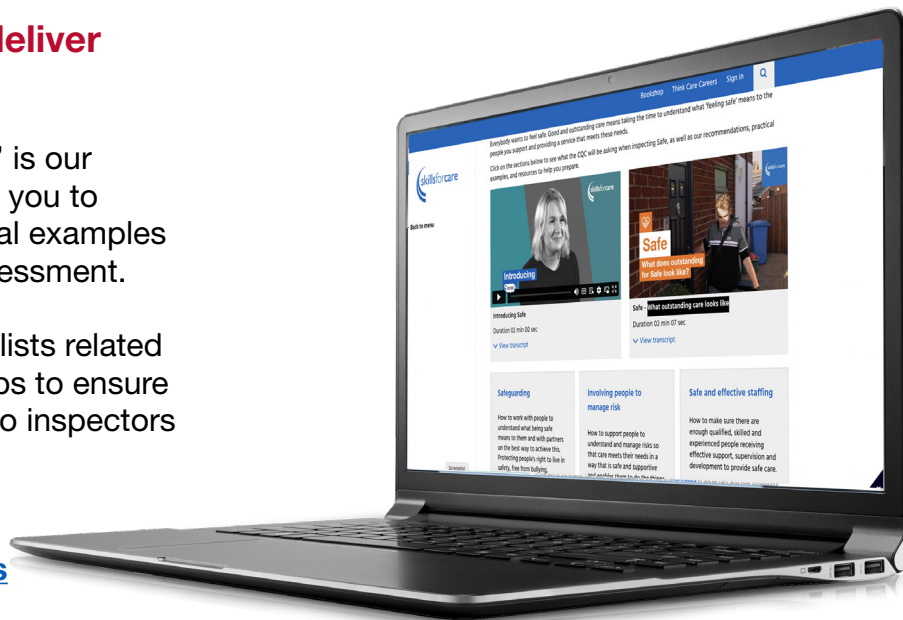
## GO Online: Helping you to deliver good and outstanding care

The 'GO Online: Inspection toolkit' is our interactive online resource helping you to access recommendations, practical examples and resources related to CQC assessment.

Providing introductions and checklists related to each area of assessment, it helps to ensure your service is ready to evidence to inspectors you are meeting their standards.

Access resources at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/assess](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/assess)



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## **GO Guide: Single Assessment Framework version**

To complement our Inspection toolkit, Skills for Care has updated our Good and Outstanding care guide.

The new GO Guide is shaped around the CQC Single Assessment Framework and provides insight into how to evidence the Quality Statements. Across 300-pages, the guide explains the step-by-step approach to impress inspectors.

The GO Guide is freely available in PDF format for all Skills for Care Registered Manager Members.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/GO-Guide](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/GO-Guide)



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## Improving your service



Each year, thousands of services fall below the CQC standards. It's important that you protect the people you support and your business from this happening.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- decide what they need to improve
- plan and implement improvements
- learn how other services have improved
- implement workforce specific improvements.

### Improving your CQC rating eLearning

This one-hour module is aimed at those working within services that have fallen below CQC standards. It covers the practical ways you can address barriers to improvement and implement the changes needed.

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## Improving your CQC rating seminar

This facilitated seminar brings together frontline managers and others from services that have fallen below CQC standards.

It provides opportunities to learn about practical ways to improve, including who to involve, how to action plan, and what to evidence.

## Guide to improvement

Our 'Guide to improvement' explains how to identify, plan and implement improvements across your service to ensure it delivers high quality care and support and meets CQC standards.

Access the guide and eLearning at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/improve](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/improve)

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## Outstanding care

### Delivering outstanding care seminar

This facilitated seminar is for providers who want to strive beyond Good and deliver the best care possible. It focuses on what sets Outstanding rated services apart and helps frontline managers and quality leads prepare to excel.

Over a day of interactive learning, discover practical tips supported by the exclusive Delivering outstanding care toolkit.

### Delivering outstanding care eLearning

This one-hour module is aimed at providing an initial introduction to what set Outstanding rated service apart. It helps showcase what the very best services are doing to inspire others to strive to deliver similar.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/outstanding](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/outstanding)

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## Connecting with others



Having strong networks and links will help you to keep up-to-date with the latest examples of best practice, find out about new approaches to delivering care and support, and learn from others.

This will help to ensure that your service provides high quality care and support and can continually improve what you do.

We can help CQC-regulated, adult social care services to:

- connect with other care services
- access peer support from local and national services
- benefit from mentoring opportunities.

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## Local networks for managers

These local networks bring together registered managers to offer peer support.

They're run by registered managers so the topics are always relevant to those attending, and give you the opportunity to share best practice and get advice from other registered managers, regulators and commissioners.

There are also regional networks that bring together deputy managers too.

Find your local network at:

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/networks](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/networks)

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/deputy](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/deputy)



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## Facebook group for social care managers

Connect with thousands of other frontline managers across the country via our Facebook group.

Access free peer support and share your own insight and good practice with other managers. Access templates used by other services and build your own network of national connections.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/facebook](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/facebook)



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## Keep informed

### Enews

Our fortnightly enews is a great way to keep up to date with the work of Skills for Care.

Sign up at: [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/enews](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/enews)

### In your area

We have area teams across England that can signpost you to relevant information, tools, events and the availability of funding for learning and development.

Find your Skills for Care locality manager at:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/inyourarea](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/inyourarea)

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**[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/CQC](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/CQC)**

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