



Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate: factsheet for care providers and frequently asked questions

May 2024

What is the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate?

- The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is a new qualification which has been developed from the Care Certificate standards, it is accredited, portable and requires assessment of skills
- The qualification is open to all eligible direct care staff, aged 19+. This will not replace the Care Certificate standards, but knowledge gained from new starter induction may be used towards gaining the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate via recognition of prior learning.

Why should I enrol my staff onto the qualification?

- Developed from the care certificate standards the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification has been designed to ensure people in care roles have the most up to date knowledge and baseline skills required to support people well and succeed in their roles.
- The qualification provides the key knowledge and skills required for the 'New to Care' role in the [Care Workforce Pathway](#), employers may therefore decide it is appropriate for a new care worker to complete the qualification alongside employer specific induction and mandatory training.
- For those who may have been in the sector for several years and deserve to be acknowledged for the skilled care they provide, the qualification will also provide a route for them to gain a recognised qualification.
- Investing in training and supporting staff to develop their careers will act as an incentive for people to join, develop, and stay in the workforce.

Where do I find out more?

- The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification will launch to the sector on 3rd June. The [qualification webpage](#) will be continually updated with

information about the awarding organisations and training providers who deliver the qualification. In the meantime, please speak with your training provider to discuss delivery.

Key Facts

Under the Department's current plans, it is encouraged for care providers to prioritise enrolling staff who don't hold a relevant qualification on to the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification to enable them to benefit from gaining one. Staff who already hold a relevant qualification may be enrolled and complete the qualification if they want to. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate sits alongside existing Level 2 options such as the Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship and Diploma in Care. We would not expect an individual to complete more than one of these level 2 options and it is up to each employer and learner to decide which option is best for them.

The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate has a total qualification time (TQT) of 369 hours of learning. We expect this to take a new learner around 6 – 8 months to complete but an experienced care worker may complete this in a shorter period of time.

A learner must be 19+ in order to enrol on the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification. This is because this qualification does not contain any English and Maths and may be most suitable for those with more life experience who need less support with these skills. It is important for younger learners, and in line with Department for Education policy, to continue the study of English and Maths until aged 19. The Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship (including the Level 2 Diploma), available to individuals from 16+, is a more suitable learning programme for this group and equips the under 19 workforce with skills they need for the future. The Level 2 Diploma in Care is a longer qualification of approximately 12 months. We know that this is well recognised in the sector and many of the workforce have already achieved this.

The current Care Certificate standards will still be able to be used as part of a robust induction process. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is a new and updated alternative which has been built from the standards to reflect best practice and with the intention of this becoming the baseline measure. Additionally, the new Level 2 is an accredited qualification.

Awarding Organisations have developed the qualifications and received approval from Skills for Care so that the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is made available for delivery by educational institutions or training providers from 3rd June 2024. A list of Awarding Organisations who have developed the qualification and had their qualification approved by Skills for Care and regulated by Ofqual can be found here [Approved Qualifications \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Approved-Qualifications)

Funding

The pre-election period started at 00:01 on Saturday 25 May, during which time there will be restrictions on the conduct of government business. This arises from the special character of government business during an election campaign, and from the need to maintain, and be seen to maintain, the impartiality of the Civil Service, and to avoid any criticism of an inappropriate use of official resources.

In this light we have assessed the position with regards to the proposed funding for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification. Having done so we have concluded that any decisions or wider activity relating to making that funding available should be suspended for the time being, pending fresh consideration by the government that will form following the General Election. This pause relates to funding decisions and activity by DHSC only.

Key features of the qualification

Ahead of the launch of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification, to ensure for sector readiness to commence enrolling learners onto the course from June 2024, we are looking to focus on, and draw, attention to the key design and delivery features as detailed below:

Initial assessment and needs of the learner – It is expected that centres delivering the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will carry out an initial assessment process. This process should ensure the learner can demonstrate the full requirements or if needed, act as an advisory process so the potential learner can reach the required standard to achieve the qualification.

Variety of delivery - Delivery and assessment should be appropriately planned to ensure the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate is accessible for all and can be delivered across a range of care settings in the sector, in line with [the assessment principles and additional guidance](#). Employers and centres should adopt a flexible approach to the delivery of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate based on their current training and induction practices. An employer may decide to complete the qualification alongside employer specific induction and mandatory training or enrol learners onto the level 2 once they have completed their induction. However, the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification does not replace the need for employers to provide a robust induction including all mandatory training.

Assessment models - The qualification assessment strategy incorporates good practices as required within the [Skills for Care & Development Assessment principles](#) and [Skills for Care JABQG Additional Assessment Principles guidance Jan 2024 003](#).

These principles support best practice in maintaining standardised approaches, upholding the rigour and integrity of work based qualifications in the sector. The amount of direct observation required should be appropriate to the qualification time, level and content, while considering the needs of the learner and setting. Centres should discuss and agree their assessment approach with their Awarding Organisation.

The sector has delivered the prior recommended Care Certificate standards since 2015, therefore there may be existing assessment skills in the workforce which could be utilised in the assessment and qualification process. The Department of Health and Social Care and Skills for Care have been clear with Awarding Organisations to support centres to consider how these skills could be safely utilised and developed e.g., through the role of an Expert Witness as part of the assessment process. If there are concerns around how direct observation will be carried out, for example, if employees are working in domiciliary care roles, then a conversation needs to be had with Awarding Organisations around what is possible, reasonable, and appropriate for the organisation or circumstances.

Recognition of Prior Learning – As highlighted in the qualification specification, it is expected that centres delivering the qualification clearly set out how prior learning (e.g., mandatory training, prior Care Certificate standards training) can be safely utilised where appropriate in the assessment process. This is particularly beneficial for those with experience in care enrolling onto the qualification with the assurance of where their skills can be evidenced and what can be taken into consideration as prior learning. Where relevant prior learning is identified it is expected that a learner's number of learning hours could be reduced.

Partnership and clear communication – Employers, centres and learners should have a clear understanding prior to undertaking the qualification of the commitment of the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate with each taking an active role in its achievement.

To support progression in the sector – Beyond the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate, 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's/care worker's discretion as to the learning they choose to access. Employees who have completed the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will be able to progress onto other types of learning and qualifications in the Care Workforce Pathway. Including the Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care. To find out more about the new Care Workforce Pathway, please visit: [Care workforce pathway for adult social care \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

Digital Skills – The department have highlighted Digital Skills as a key learning and development priority for care workers. The use of digital technologies has been

referred to throughout the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification criteria and assessment guidance where relevant.

Frequently Asked Questions

Level 2 landscape

Q: How does the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate fit in with the existing level 2 options?

The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate sits alongside existing Level 2 options such as the Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship and Diploma in Care. We would not expect an individual to complete more than one of these level 2 options and it is up to each employer and learner to decide which option is best for them.

Q: What is the difference between this qualification, the diploma and apprenticeship?

A learner must be 19+ to enrol for the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate. This is because this qualification does not contain any English and Maths and may be most suitable for those with more life experience who need less support with these skills.

It is important for younger learners, and in line with Department for Education policy, to continue the study of English and Maths until aged 19. The Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship (including the Level 2 Diploma), available to individuals from 16+, is a more suitable learning programme for this group and equips the under 19 workforce with skills they need for the future.

The Level 2 Diploma in Care is a longer qualification of approximately 12 months. We know that this is well recognised in the sector and many of the workforce have already achieved this.

Q: Are the Level 2 Adult Care Apprenticeship and Diploma in Care being revised?

The Level 2 Adult Care Worker Apprenticeship and Diploma in Care should continue to be delivered by Awarding Organisations and Training Providers in their current form. The Level 2 Standard may be revised in the future, and we are collaborating with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and Department for Education as they progress this work.

Learning and Assessment

Q: How will assessment work?

The assessment process is to ensure the learner is competent against a set of defined knowledge and skills. Assessments are carried out via qualified assessors.

A learner will have regular formal assessment interventions. The assessor will plan with the individual the best way to evidence the requirements in the qualification and there are a range of assessment methods which can be used. The assessor can also adapt assessment methods depending on learner need, for example, if an individual does not feel confident expressing themselves in written format. The formal assessment cycle includes planning, review and feedback meetings to discuss the learners needs and what evidence is needed to meet the criteria of the qualification and progress. Once the learner has submitted evidence of knowledge and skills, the assessor will review against the qualification content and provide relevant feedback.

Q: What is the registered managers role in this?

If you have decided that the Level 2 Adult Social Care qualification is the right route for your workforce, you will need to find a learning/training provider to deliver this. Registered managers should liaise with the learning/training provider to understand the needs of the qualification and agree the best method of teaching, learning, assessment and delivery for learners. They should also support the assessor to plan their observation visits to mitigate any negative impact on individuals accessing care and support.

Registered managers and others in the workplace with existing Care Certificate standards delivery experience can also act in a valuable role in the formal qualification assessment process, this might be by sharing relevant evidence from within the workplace which could be used, providing statements and support to the learner. There may also be if appropriate, opportunities for those in the workplace with existing Care Certificate standards delivery experience to become formally qualified assessors.

Q: How is this practically different to the standards?

The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate differs to the current Care Certificate Standards in that it requires formal assessment as it is an accredited qualification. There is a greater depth of learning in the content of the qualification and as a result will take longer to complete. The qualification also includes up to date content to better reflect the current needs and developments of the adult social care workforce.

funInduction and Mandatory training

Q: How will the qualification align to other recommendations and developments in the sector?

Learning outcomes in the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification 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 Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification who work for regulated service providers will have attended training that meets the standards in the code of practice prior to, or alongside, completing the new qualification.

Q: Why is the government introducing this when the sector already accesses learning, training and assessment based on the Care Certificate standards?

Current 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 of Health and Social Care has developed 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 standardisation in how the Care Certificate standards are delivered. The new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will provide a baseline standard and help recognise our care workforce and the professional career that it is.

Turnover of staff is 9% lower where there is access to learning opportunities to gain skills and qualifications, and investing and supporting staff to develop their careers will act as an incentive for people to join, develop and stay in the workforce.

The qualification will not be mandatory at the moment.

Q: What is going to happen to the existing Care Certificate Standards?

The Department for Health and Social Care are liaising with sector bodies and the CQC on the future of the Care Certificate Standards and will be sharing more guidance on this in the coming months. The existing Care Certificate standards should continue to be accessed and used by the adult social care sector to support initial induction training while this work is underway.

Qualification delivery – Employers and Training providers

Q: Do providers have to be registered and approved by an Awarding Organisation (AO) to deliver the qualification?

Yes, learning/training providers need to be approved by an AO (who are approved by Ofqual) to deliver the qualification.

Q: How will we source the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification for the adult social care workforce?

You will need to contract a learning/training provider who has been approved by an Awarding Organisation to deliver the qualification.

Q: How will quality be assured of the new qualification?

Quality is the responsibility of all those involved in delivering the qualification and this is formally monitored by the Awarding Organisation (AO) who has approved the centre to deliver the qualification.

Skills for Care will be quality assuring the qualifications submitted by AOs and we require AOs to provide a robust explanation of how they assess and monitor the competency of their approved centres as part of our approval process.

An AO carries out a formal approval process for learning centres looking to deliver all qualifications.

Quality of provision and any potential risks with centre delivery are then continually monitored by the AO through several approaches including regular compliance monitoring and external quality assurance activities.

Q: What happens when there might be considerations or challenges in enabling access to the workplace to external assessors?

There are robust Assessment Principles and guidance which are in place to create a consistent and fair approach to assessment in sector qualifications. Guidance is provided when additional factors need to be considered within the assessment process.