



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

## **Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate: factsheet for training providers**

**May 2024**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is introducing a new Level 2 qualification for the adult social care workforce, for individuals working in direct care. The Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate, which has been developed from the 15 widely used Care Certificate standards, is part of our commitment to recognising our care workforce for the professional career it is.

Currently over 50% of the workforce do not hold an accredited qualification but the sector is filled with experienced and committed colleagues who deserve to be acknowledged for the skilled care they provide. Our aim is that the Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate will provide a route for thousands of staff to gain a recognised qualification, reaffirming care work as a career and helping to recruit and retain talent.

In March 2023, DHSC appointed Skills for Care to develop a qualification specification to enable better consistency in portability and standardisation in how the current standards are delivered, achieved, and assessed. This was following research into the current Care Certificate delivery which found that 48% of employers did not accept a Care Certificate from a prior employer and 37% of care workers had to recomplete this when moving jobs. These findings highlighted the need to distinguish the care certificate from other inductions and reduce the need for repeat training via an accredited qualification.

The content of the new qualification has been developed so that it represents best practice and should not deviate significantly from the standards as they already exist. The structure and format have not changed, but the specification includes small changes to include most up to date knowledge and baseline skills required to support people well and succeed in their roles. Additionally, the learning outcomes have been updated for an awareness of learning disability and autism to be consistent with learning outcomes from the Core Capabilities Frameworks.

### **Key Facts**

Under the Department's current plans, it is encouraged for care providers to prioritise enrolling staff who do not 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 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.

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.

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 Ofqual 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://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.