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**The Care Certificate**

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**What is the Care Certificate?**

The Care Certificate is a recognised set of standards that the over 1.3 million (Cavendish 2013) frontline non-regulated health and social care support workforce practice in their daily working life. The Care Certificate was designed for those who have direct contact with the public, including support staff within hospitals, care homes and people’s own homes to promote the delivery of compassionate, safe, high quality care by staff observing the same introductory skills, knowledge and behaviours.

The Care Certificate:

* applies across health and social care in England;
* links to competences (National Occupational Standards) and units in qualifications;
* covers what is required to be caring;
* equips workers with the fundamental skills they need to provide quality care
* gives them a formal basis from which they can further develop knowledge and skills as their career progresses

**Why has the Care Certificate been developed?**

Camilla Cavendish a British journalist and policy advisor, was requested by the Secretary of State to review and make recommendations on the recruitment, learning and development, management and support of healthcare assistants and social care support workers, ensuring that this workforce provides compassionate care in the wake of the Francis Inquiry into mid-Staffordshire hospital.

The resulting report, The Cavendish Review: An Independent Review into Healthcare Assistants and Support Workers in the NHS and Social Care Settings (2013) found that preparation of healthcare assistants and social care support workers for their roles within care settings was inconsistent with Cavendish recommending the development of a Certificate of Fundamental Care, the ‘Care Certificate’.

The Care Certificate was developed in partnership by Health Education England, Skills for Health and Skills for Care and was formally piloted by 29 organisations across health and social care, before being launched nationwide on the 1st April 2015.

**Who should do the Care Certificate?**

* Health Care Assistants, Assistant Practitioners, Care Support Workers and those giving support to clinical roles in the NHS where there is any direct contact with patients
* Care Support Workers denotes Adult Social Care workers giving direct care in residential and nursing homes and hospices, home care workers and domiciliary care staff.
* Other roles in health and social care such as caring volunteers, porters, cooks or drivers that have direct contact with patients and service users could also undertake all or some of the Care Certificate, but in order for the Care Certificate to be awarded the person must achieve success in all of the outcomes and assessment requirements.

**Is the Care Certificate statutory?**

There is no statutory requirement for health and social care providers to implement the Care Certificate into practice, therefore the Care Quality Commission (CQC) the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England cannot enforce it. However CQC inspectors do have powers to enforce regulations regarding staff training and can expect to see health and social care organisations providing induction programmes that meet the Care Certificate standards.

**What the CQC expect**

The CQC expects providers to induct, support and train their staff appropriately. In their guidance for providers on how to meet the regulations, they are explicit about their expectation that those who employ health care support workers and adult social care workers should be able to demonstrate that staff have, or are working towards, the skills set out in the Care Certificate, as the benchmark for staff induction.

The statutory requirements on staff training are contained in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, and are enforced by the CQC. Regulation 18(2) (a) says that:

“Persons employed by the service provider in the provision of a regulated activity must receive such appropriate support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal as is necessary to enable them to carry out the duties they are employed to perform.”

The guidance for providers on how they can comply with regulation 18 states that:

“Providers must ensure that they have an induction programme that prepares staff for their role. It is expected that providers that employ healthcare assistants and social care support workers should follow the Care Certificate standards to make sure new staff are supported, skilled and assessed as competent to carry out their roles.”

Regulation 19(1) (b) says that:

“Persons employed for the purposes of carrying on a regulated activity must have the qualifications, competence, skills and experience which are necessary for the work to be performed by them.”

The guidance for providers as to how they can comply with regulation 19 states that:

“It is expected that providers that employ healthcare assistants and social care support workers should follow the Care Certificate standards to assess their competence.”

**CQC Inspections**

During CQC inspections, inspectors explore a provider’s approach to staff induction, support and training using key lines of enquiry.

In particular,

* Is the service effective?
* Do staff have the right qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience to do their job?
* How are learning needs identified? Is there a workforce development plan to encourage staff to develop and promote good practice?
* Do staff have appropriate induction, support, training, supervision?
* How are staff supported and managed?

The inspectors do this in a range of ways; by speaking to new members of staff, speaking to managers, speaking to people who use the service, observation of practice, looking at staff records and training plans, etc.

All providers should be able to demonstrate how they are meeting the regulations and how they are providing a safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led service.

**What does the Care Certificate cover?**

The Care Certificate has been mapped to the following (Skills for Health 2015):

* The Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers
* National Occupational Standards
* Qualification and Credit framework units
* The National Minimum Training Standards (no longer in use – superseded by the Care Certificate)
* The Common Induction Standards (no longer in use – superseded by the Care Certificate)
* Compassion in Practice (The 6C’s)

**The Care Certificate standards**

1. Understand Your Role

2. Your Personal Development

3. Duty of Care

4. Equality and Diversity

5. Work in a Person Centred Way

6. Communication

7. Privacy and Dignity

8. Fluids and Nutrition

9. Dementia and Cognitive Issues

10. Safeguarding Adults

11. Safeguarding Children

12. Basic Life Support

13. Health and Safety

14. Handling Information

15. Infection Prevention and Control

**What is the minimum time permitted for providing the training requirements of the Care Certificate?**

It is estimated to take around 12 weeks to achieve the Care Certificate for a new full-time staff member with no previous experience of working in health or social care. This is just a recommendation, the actual timeframe will vary according to individual characteristics, and other variables such as working hours and shift patterns.

Staff should not work without direct supervision until they have completed the Care Certificate assessment. This does not mean they are supernumerary, an appropriately qualified colleague does need to be physically present, or within immediate distance, such as on the same floor, and available to respond to the needs of the member of staff undertaking the care certificate. There may need to be a phased sign-off of the care certificate so that as someone is assessed competent in one area of work, they are able to work in it without direct supervision while they continue to be directly supervised in other areas.

The Care Certificate is designed to be portable so once the support worker has attained the certificate they will not have to automatically undertake it again including a move to a new employer or new role. All employers are expected to ensure that new staff have retained the competencies required by the Care Certificate. This could require the need for an individual to undergo periodic refresher training. This would be at the employer’s discretion as there is no compulsory requirement to update the Care Certificate, once successfully completed.

**What is the certification process?**

On completing the Care Certificate an individual is viewed as occupationally competent as the Care Certificate is not an accredited as a qualification. The UK Training Agency (1988) defined occupationally competent as *‘the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standards expected in employment. (This includes) the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations, organisation and planning of work, innovation and coping with non-routine activities (and the) personal effectiveness to deal with co-workers, managers and customers*’. It is possible to assess the Care Certificate so that it can count towards gaining a Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF) award. To do this the employing organisation needs to use qualified assessors, even though this is not a formal requirement.

It can still be possible for some of the same evidence staff have collect for the Care Certificate to be re-used towards gaining QCF qualifications and apprenticeships, this however would have to be re-assessed against qualification requirements.

**What about current staff in support roles?**

Current staff should have already completed the training required for induction which was specified by the previous standards. Individual employers are responsible for judging whether the jobs of individual staff require them to meet the additional standards in the Care Certificate. An employer is required to assess the skills and training needs of new staff, and based on this assessment may choose to provide training in all, or some, of the standards required by the Care Certificate.

Employers may ask new staff to use the self-assessment tool to help decide what further training, if any, may be necessary before awarding the Care Certificate. Employers are also responsible for ensuring internal bank staff and external agency staff hold the Care Certificate or equivalent, and that this group is appropriately inducted to the workplace.

**How is the Care Certificate delivered?**

There should be corresponding teaching delivered alongside completion of the Care Certificate workbook covering all the knowledge elements. In pilot sites this typically lasted between one and two weeks. The teaching can be delivered in-house or by external providers. Staff can practice and develop their skills in a classroom environment but the majority of the assessment evidence must be collected during real work activity. Employers could choose to use e-learning modules, particularly useful for staff working in community based roles.

Some of the assessment criteria only test knowledge, while others test knowledge and practical competence. The workbook is provided nationally and is free to download at skillsforhealth.org.uk

**The Care Certificate Workbook**

The Care Certificate Workbook was produced following the Care Certificate pilot. It was developed using input from sector experts and reviewed by health and social care employers.

The workbook only covers some aspects of the Care Certificate. The workbook can be used to enable new health and social care workers to demonstrate their understanding on the knowledge content of the Care Certificate.

Health and social care employers still need to provide appropriate practical training, supervision and workplace assessment as these cannot be covered by a workbook.

**Is there any additional funding?**

The government believes employers should be responsible for induction of their new staff. Some Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs) have released monies to health employers to support Care Certificate activity. Skills for Health and Skills for Care are also supporting programmes and materials with funding.

**Validation and Care Certificate standards**

The government decided that each individual employer has to assure the quality of their own training and assessment as there is no external validation or quality assurance system on cost grounds.

Care Certificate guidance states employers may select to introduce a quality assurance system where their assessors come together to review evidence and consistency check their assessment judgments. Employers may choose to work in partnership with other organisations to standardise assessment quality.

**How is the Care Certificate assessed?**

Staff are assessed against all the standards and on completion can be awarded the Care Certificate. Evidence of prior learning cannot be accepted instead of an assessment, with the exception of the standard on basic life support.

Assessment of knowledge and understanding is prefixed with verbs such as “describe”, “explain”, “define”, “list” or “identify” and can be based upon written or verbal evidence such as a workbook, written questions, case studies or sound files.

Evidence of performance prefixed with words such as “demonstrate”, “take steps to”, “use” or “show” must be undertaken in the workplace during learners’ real work activity and observed by the assessor (unless the use of simulation is specifically allowed).

Employers are responsible for maintaining records of staff training that are required for inspection purposes by the CQC. For staff working in the National Health Service completion of the certificate may also appear on an employee’s NHS Electronic Staff Record and in social care employers should record Care Certificate completion in the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC).

**The Code of Conduct and the Care Certificate?**

The Care Certificate defines the care standards support workers must know and be able to deliver in practice, complementing The Skills for Care and Skills for Health’s Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England, a voluntary Code that describes the behaviours and attitudes that people who use care and support services should expect to experience.

The Code of Conduct (2013) is for:

* Healthcare Support Workers (including Assistant Practitioners) in England who have patient facing roles (where they do not already have a Code that applies to them).
* Adult Social Care Workers in England. This could be in an independent capacity (for example as Personal Assistant), for a residential care provider, or as a supported living, day support o domiciliary care worker. Social Work Assistants are not included.

The Code of Conduct (2013) states a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care

Worker in England must:

1. Be accountable by making sure you can answer for your actions or omissions.

2. Promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use health and care services and their carers at all times.

3. Work in collaboration with your colleagues to ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and compassionate healthcare, care and support.

4. Communicate in an open, and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of people who use health and care services and their carers.

5. Respect a person’s right to confidentiality.

6. Strive to improve the quality of healthcare, care and support through continuing professional development.

7. Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

**The following resources are available from www.skillsforcare.org.uk & www.skillsforhealth.org.uk to support the Care Certificate:**

* ***The Standards*** – overview of what is covered by the 15 Standards
* ***Care Certificate Framework (Assessor)*** – highlighting what needs to be assessed and how
* ***Guidance Document*** – complementing the framework, this guidance explains more about training, support and workplace assessment
* ***Care Certificate Overview videos*** – brief introductory videos explaining what the Care Certificate is for 1) new workers and 2) employers
* ***The Care Certificate Workbook*** –covering the knowledge learning parts of the 15 induction standards
* ***Care Certificate Presentations*** – downloads covering knowledge learning part of the induction standard, excluding Standards 10, 11, 12 and 13
* ***Self-Assessment Tool*** – practical resource to support recruitment processes to help identify what past learning may exist
* ***Mapping Document*** – practical resource to support recruitment processes showing the overlap between earlier induction programmes and Level 2 and Level 3 Diplomas in Health and Social Care
* ***Certificate Template*** – for use by employers to complete once the new worker has completed their Care Certificate induction
* ***Questions and Answers*** – this regularly updated questions reflects key points for employers, workers and learning providers
* ***The Care Certificate and Learning Providers*** – this statement was issued to protect employers around miscommunications about what the Care Certificate was and how it can be delivered
* ***Observation Record Template*** – practical resource to enable assessors to record observations as the new worker progresses through the induction

**References**

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