

Frequently asked questions about personal assistants (PAs) doing the care certificate

The Care Certificate was introduced in April 2015 and is one part of an induction for healthcare and adult social care support workers.

The Care Certificate comprises of 15 standards and sets out the learning outcomes, competences, and standards of care that healthcare support and adult social care workers are expected to deliver. Competences relate to the overall ability of the worker to carry out their work safely. This includes the worker's knowledge, skills and behaviours.

General information

Do PAs have to complete the Care Certificate?

A PA does not have to have complete the Care Certificate.

However, as an employer you're responsible for ensuring that your PA(s) have the right skills and knowledge to do their role, and a thorough induction is a key part of this. If you recruit a PA who is new to care you might choose to use the Care Certificate as a basis for your induction, and tailor it to your workplace arrangements and care and support needs.

If you employ a PA with experience, they may have already achieved the competencies or completed the standards outlined in the Care Certificate. But it's good idea, as part of their induction with you, to ask them about their previous experience and training to ensure that they meet your requirements.

If you use a service where your PA is employed by a provider who's regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), rather than yourself, then the CQC expect that those who are new to care will achieve the competencies required by the Care Certificate as part of their induction.

Some people have PAs who are self-employed. Some of which may have already completed the knowledge elements of the Care Certificate standards as part of an accreditation programme, for example [Support with Confidence](#).

Does a PA performing delegated healthcare tasks have to complete the Care Certificate?

The Care Certificate is part of an induction for staff employed as 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. For PAs performing delegated healthcare tasks the Care Certificate is not mandatory but is considered best practice. A delegated healthcare task is a task which has been delegated to the PA by a registered practitioner.

Why should a PA complete the Care Certificate?

The Care Certificate sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are expected of health and social care workers to ensure they deliver high quality care and support. It's developed and maintained by the sectors and ensures that all new workers are supported when they first start working in care and lots of this knowledge, skills and behaviours will also be relevant to PAs.

Therefore, the Care Certificate (or parts of it) can be used as part of a PA induction which will form the introduction to their career in social care and/or health.

Can a PA complete only part of the Care Certificate?

You can use separate standards to form the basis of an induction, but the Care Certificate can only be awarded if all 15 standards are completed and the PA's skills are deemed competent in a work-place assessment. Where an employer or their existing staff don't feel confident or competent to assess, they may wish to consider support from: the organisation issuing their budget (if they receive one), a local support organisation or a training provider.

What role does an individual employer have in supporting their PA in completing the Care Certificate?

An individual employer may wish to judge whether their PA could benefit from completing some or all of the Care Certificate, based on their [the PA's] skills and training needs.

Employers are responsible for assuring the quality of the teaching and assessment of the Care Certificate. The assessment must be carried out by someone who is 'occupationally competent'; this is someone who has the necessary experience to judge whether the learner has demonstrated the required competences. Assessment is a process of measuring a worker's knowledge and skills and will include observing practice.

The guidance doesn't specify that someone delivering the training and carrying out assessment needs a specific qualification. The person who does this could be the individual employer if they're experienced and have the confidence to assess someone; or another PA could be used if they have sufficient care experience in assessing others.

Where an employer or their existing staff don't feel confident or competent to assess, they may wish to consider support from: the organisation issuing their budget [if they receive one], a local support organisation or a training provider.

What support is available for individual employers who want their staff to undertake the Care Certificate?

Individual employers can apply for funding from Skills for Care to cover the cost of care related training for both themselves and their PAs, including the Care Certificate.