



Care Training Code:
a guide for individuals buying
in training for their own staff

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A. What this guide is for

This Care Training Code guide has been designed to help anyone who may need to buy in training for their own staff, such as a personal assistant or supporter¹.

The Code provides:

- an overview of the core values which should form the basis of social care training and development
- questions and issues that should be thought about when purchasing training and development.

B. What is social care?

“Social care” consists of a group of services that provide personal care and support to people, helping them maintain or achieve independence, play a fuller part in society, protecting them in difficult situations and helping manage complex relationships. Many of the people who are supported by these services are among society’s potentially most vulnerable.

Those who purchase, use and provide learning support have an important role to play in developing a high quality social care workforce by making sure that learning and development is focused on real needs, provides value for money and produces positive and real results.

There is a need to ensure that the ‘voices’ of people who use services, and of carers, are properly considered, and that providers of training and development understand this. Learning provision across social care should be about helping the workforce make a real contribution to people’s lives. People should expect and demand high value for money.

¹ We have used ‘assistant’ but recognise that an individual may have more than one

C. What are the core values of social care training and development?

Training and development needs to reflect the core values of social care as set out in the Common Induction Standards² and GSCC Codes of Practice³.

Training and development providers in the social care sector particularly value:

- placing the needs of people who use services at the heart of their designs for learning
- supporting the development of social care services
- the potential of learning to benefit people emotionally, intellectually, socially and economically, and learning's contribution to community growth and sustainability
- all learners: their progress and development, their learning goals and aspirations and the experience they bring to their learning and to others
- equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to learners, the workforce, and communities
- reflection and evaluation of their own practice and their continuing professional development as learning providers
- collaboration with other individuals, groups and/or organisations with a legitimate interest in the progress and development of learners.

This section of the Code provides information for people who employ, or intend to employ, their own personal assistant or supporter, perhaps using money received through direct payments.

Direct payments and individual budgets⁴ are proving to be very popular. They help many people take better control over their own lives and help them receive the services and support they want, how they want them and when they want them.

Direct payments and individual budgets also bring new challenges; most especially in relation to your being the employer, manager and skills developer of one or more personal assistants. The purpose of these notes is to help you think through some of the training and development issues. The notes do not provide information about other aspects of direct payments or employment. Some of the resources mentioned in Section H below, and in the Glossary, will help you get this information.

² note to see glossary

³ note to see glossary

⁴ note to see glossary

To get the best value for money in employing a personal assistant or supporter, you will probably want to work with them to improve their skills and knowledge. You might wish to have their achievement recognised through a social care qualification.

You will need to think about any training/development needs that your personal assistant might have and how you will work with them to meet these needs. Training should be motivating for them but it should also help ensure that you get the best possible support.

You might find the following questions helpful. At first sight, they might seem rather complicated, but generally it's a matter of working through the questions in a methodical way and knowing what resources to turn to.

D. How am I going to get started with my personal assistant?

Your home has become your personal assistant's place of work. As with any new employee in any workplace there will be an induction period when they need to 'settle-in'. What is done during this induction will vary, but in essence it is likely to include what your assistant/employee needs to:

- know about your needs and preferences
- understand in order to begin to work with you in a safe and sensitive way
- know about your home environment (e.g. use of assistive technologies, particular adaptations).

Personal assistants don't need to know everything in the first few weeks. But you need to make certain that they understand the important things by thinking through what these are and having a plan to make sure they get addressed. They will also need to understand what they need to do to support you in your own home and who they will need to deal with outside your home in order to support you. For this they may need to learn new skills.

Skills for Care has developed Common Induction Standards⁵ for people working in adult social care. You can use these as a checklist to help you think about how to approach the early days with your personal assistant.

You can also work through the advice given in Skills for Care's *Guidance for those responsible for workers in an induction period (e.g. workplace managers, employers, people who use services)*. Together with your personal assistant, you can use this to develop a plan for tackling their induction period; preferably setting this out before they start working with you.

⁵ note to see glossary

You can get both the Common Induction Standards and the Guidance document from www.skillsforcare.org.uk. If you don't have access to the internet, ask Skills for Care's information service on Tel: 0113 241 1275 for them, who will also be able to tell you how you can contact your regional Skills for Care office.

E. How can I help my personal assistants develop their skills?

Having a good relationship with your personal assistant, and a good development plan, is a key to being a good employer. You might find it helpful to think of this as a planning process that continues throughout your relationship and which involves the following four aspects.

1. **Assessing your assistant's development needs**

You will have thought about your own needs and expectations. What skills will your personal assistant require to meet these? What skills do they already have? What will they need to learn to develop additional skills?

During their induction you will have covered the basic skill requirements. You and they need to think about the sorts of skills and knowledge they require to make working with you a success. Talk this through with them and draw up a list of things which you both think need to be learnt or developed - a 'learning plan'. Remember this is about development and not about identifying faults!

2. **Draw up a learning plan**

Look at the list of needs you have both identified and think about the best way of making sure they are covered over a sensible period of time.

The learning plan might include:

- skills needed to perform their role
- things they need to know or understand about their role
- sources of advice, guidance and support
- technical questions regarding, say, equipment
- questions about values and attitudes
- who could provide training/development.

There may be specific skills needed: for example, food preparation and hygiene, moving and handling, personal care, health and safety, disability awareness, infection control, or administering medicines.

Remember that learning should be enjoyable and motivating. It may be that for some parts of the plan it would be good for both you and your personal assistant to learn together.

3. Put the plan into action and monitor progress

Decide how the training and development can be best provided, and by whom. Care Training Code: a guide for purchasers of training and development describes what sort of things you can consider. Also, take advice from others on how particular learning needs might be met and see the resources section at the end of this guide.

Try to be imaginative and creative and suit the plan to both your needs and those of your personal assistant. Try to prioritise the learning identified in the plan so that less important things can be left until later.

Make sure the ideas and actions you have put into the plan are followed through by you and your personal assistant. Make time to talk about the plan and how it is going. If it needs changing, or other priorities crop-up, then change it through mutual agreement. You may like to build in regular 'supervision and review' discussions.

4. Re-assess needs

Set aside time to go back to the original plan and look at it in the light of experience after, say, three months, six months and a year. Check what progress has been made. Ask yourselves whether the needs have changed and did the plan work. Carry out a fresh assessment of need, building on the original one but trying to stretch beyond it. Then start planning again!

Effective training is never a matter of just 'ticking all the boxes and then you're done'; it's a continuous process of improvement. Remember to recognise and praise achievement.

F. Will my personal assistant need a qualification?

Your personal assistant might already have a relevant qualification; there are a growing number of people in social care who have. A common qualification is a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in Health and Social Care⁶. If your personal assistant has this, it's a good sign that they have worked through a process of having their skills and knowledge checked against national criteria by trained assessors⁷ and have achieved an award from a recognised national awarding body⁸. Reaching the skills level required by an NVQ is quite an achievement for care workers and is a good indication to you of their quality.

If your personal assistant does not have a recognised qualification, you will need to think about whether you want to help them to gain one. You will need to find out about issues relating to funding their qualification, and ask questions about how the formal assessment needs of the qualification can be met.

To receive advice on this, talk to your Direct Payments team. If necessary, ask them to talk with their own human resources or staff development colleagues. Supporting people to gain a qualification requires energy and commitment but has the potential for great satisfaction and is likely to help improve the support that you receive.

G. How can I use networks of people being supported by social care services?

You will probably be aware of, or already participating in, networks or groups of people being supported by social care services. Make full use of these to talk about recruitment and training issues. Share experiences, problems faced and ideas on how to get things done. Use the groups to bring outside expertise along to talk about resources and ideas for meeting training needs. Explore how many of the individual training needs could be met through shared activities; these might be more cost effective and more enjoyable for the personal assistants themselves.

Some people receiving direct payments have spoken of their fear of having to look at recruitment and training issues, perhaps for the first time. Use the networks both to gain knowledge and to reassure others just starting that many things become possible with a little thought and planning. You can also use them to help argue for more training for both those receiving direct payments and for personal assistants.

⁶ note to see glossary

⁷ note to see glossary

⁸ note to see glossary

H. Where can I find more information?

The glossary at the end of this guide provides further information about many of the terms and organisations mentioned in this guide. It also provides links to further information.

You may find it useful to contact Skills for Care who carry a vast range of information and resources about all aspects of training and development. Skills for Care has a national office (in Leeds) and offices in each region.

National information line: 0113 241 1275

e-mail: info@skillsforcare.org.uk

website: www.skillsforcare.org.uk

All of these will be able to direct you to your regional office.

There is a wide range of information available about direct payments and individual budgets, and about support available. Skills for Care will be able to direct you to this.

Glossary

<p>Assessor/verifier</p>	<p>Assessors assess whether a learner has reached the level of competence required to be given a particular award or qualification. They also generally induct learners onto a training or development programme, provide assessment support in the workplace and provide on-going support. Assessors work for an 'assessment centre' which can be in-house at an employer, at a college of FE or at a private sector training provider. Assessors have a qualification (eg A1, A2 or D32/33) and are occupationally competent at the appropriate level.</p> <p>Verifiers ensure the quality of assessment. They have a qualification (eg V1, V2 or D34) and be occupationally competent at the appropriate level.</p>
<p>Association of Care Training and Assessment Networks (ACTAN)</p>	<p>ACTAN is a national organisation representing health & social care sector training, education and development providers. It aims to promote and develop best practice across health, care and education and represents the members on a local, regional and national level. A wide range of publications is available.</p> <p>www.actan.org.uk</p>
<p>Awarding body</p>	<p>An organisation that awards qualifications to learners and is responsible for: developing qualifications; assessing and quality assuring qualifications; awarding qualifications; providing customer service to assessment centres and learners.</p> <p>www.qca.org.uk</p>
<p>Common Induction Standards for Adult Social Care</p>	<p>The standards are designed for people entering social care work and those changing roles or employers within adult social care. They set out the areas of knowledge that care workers need to know before they can work unsupervised. They comprise: understanding principles of care; understanding the organisation and role of the worker; maintaining safety at work; communicating effectively; recognising and responding to abuse and neglect; developing as a worker and are designed to be met within a 12-week period. The standards are not set at any particular qualification level, but they readily link to the NVQ level 2 - the minimum qualification used within the sector.</p> <p>www.skillsforcare.org.uk</p>
<p>Direct payments and individual budget</p>	<p>Direct payments are cash payments given to people who use services in lieu of care/support services they need, so that they can purchase those services (eg employ their own personal assistants). These payments give people greater choice in their care and support.</p> <p>Individual budgets: (a) go beyond social care, to cover Supporting People, Disabled Facilities Grant, Independent Living Fund, Access to Work and community equipment services; and (b) set an overall budget for all of these services, which people can choose to take as cash payments, services or a mixture of both.</p> <p>http://www.dh.gov.uk</p>

General Social Care Council (GSCC)	<p>GSCC is the social care workforce regulator and ‘guardian of standards’ for the social care workforce in England. It is responsible for the codes of practice, Social Care Register and social work education and training, thereby increasing the protection of people who use services, their carers and the general public.</p> <p>www.gsccl.org.uk</p>
GSCC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care Workers	<p>Describe the standards of conduct and practice within which employers of social care workers should work and sets down the responsibilities of employers in the regulation of workers.</p> <p>www.gsccl.org.uk</p>
GSCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers	<p>Describe the standards of conduct and practice within which social care workers should work.</p> <p>www.gsccl.org.uk</p>
Knowledge sets	<p>Knowledge sets provide descriptions of specific knowledge and understanding to help social care workers undertake their role and are designed to improve consistency in the learning of the adult social care workforce. They are key learning outcomes for specific areas of work and extend the NOS. Knowledge sets are designed to be used separately or alongside the Common Induction Standards and as part of a worker’s continuing professional development. The following knowledge sets are available, with more topics planned: Infection prevention and control, Dementia, Nutrition & well-being, Safeguarding of vulnerable adults, Workers not involved in direct care, and Medication.</p> <p>www.skillsforcare.org.uk</p>
National Occupational Standards (NOS)	<p>NOS describe the skills, knowledge and understanding required by workers for specific functions. They are based on an analysis of functions performed in the workplace and form the basis of NVQs, for which they are commonly known as the ‘competencies’. NOS are available for care staff, social workers, managers and some social work post qualifying awards. NOS can be used for defining work roles, for staff recruitment, supervision and appraisal purposes. They have also been broken down into knowledge and skills sets (see above).</p> <p>www.skillsforcare.org.uk</p>
National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)	<p>NVQs are work-related, competence-based qualifications. They reflect the skills and knowledge needed to do a particular job effectively, and show that an individual is competent in the area of work the NVQ represents. They are based on National Occupational Standards (NOS). Adult social care has NVQs at levels 2-4. Skills for Care have a short guide to NVQs at:</p> <p>www.skillsforcare.org.uk</p> <p>www.qca.org.uk/14-19/qualifications/index_nvqs.htm</p>
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)	<p>SCIE’s aim is to improve the experience of people who use social care by developing and promoting knowledge about good practice in the sector. Using knowledge gathered from diverse sources and a broad range of people and organisations, SCIE develops resources which are shared freely, supporting those working in social care and empowering people who use services.</p> <p>www.scie.org.uk/</p>



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