

Title

Care Certificate Standards in Community Care Policy and Procedures

Principle

Homekare Community Services is committed to ensuring that every team member employed to provide regulated activity is competent, skilled, and able to deliver safe, effective, and person-centred care before working unsupervised with any service user.

The Care Certificate, developed by Skills for Care, Health Education England, and NHS England, sets out 15 standards that define the baseline knowledge, skills, and behaviours required of every new team member. Homekare Community Services adopts the Care Certificate as the mandatory induction framework for all new team members and support team who have not previously completed it or who cannot demonstrate equivalent prior competency.

This policy sets out Homekare Community Services commitment to:

- Ensuring 100% of eligible new care workers complete all 15 Care Certificate standards within 12 weeks of commencing employment
- Providing structured, supported induction that enables Care Certificate completion in a real community care setting
- Deploying only competent assessors to sign off Care Certificate standards
- Maintaining accurate Care Certificate records as part of every team member's personal file
- Linking Care Certificate completion to wider workforce development, supervision, and appraisal processes
- Monitoring Care Certificate compliance as a core governance and quality assurance indicator

Objectives

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- Define Homekare Community Services legal and regulatory obligations in relation to Care Certificate delivery under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Set out the roles and responsibilities of all team member's involved in Care Certificate induction, assessment, and governance
- Describe the step-by-step procedure for inducting, supervising, and signing off new care workers against all 15 Care Certificate standards
- Ensure alignment with CQC Fundamental Standards, Skills for Care guidance, NICE evidence-based standards, SCIE best practice, health and safety legislation, and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) multi-agency procedures

- Provide a consistent, fair, and auditable Care Certificate process across all HomeKare Community Services

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All new team member's, senior team member's, and support team member's who have direct contact with clients and who have not previously completed the Care Certificate
- All existing team member's who require an updated or refreshed Care Certificate assessment
- All registered managers, senior team member's, and other competent team member's acting as Care Certificate assessors
- Agency and bank workers deployed by HomeKare Community Service— noting that HomeKare Community Service retains responsibility for assessing competency even where a worker holds a Care Certificate from a previous employer

Exemptions:

Workers who hold a Level 2 or above health or social care qualification (e.g., QCF/NVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care, Level 3 in Health and Social Care, nursing or allied health qualification) may be considered for exemption from specific Care Certificate standards where they can demonstrate prior learning equivalent to that standard. Exemption decisions must be formally assessed, documented, and approved by the Registered Manager. See Section 7.4.

Responsibilities

Director / Nominated Individual

- Receiving quarterly reports on Care Certificate compliance rates as part of governance oversight
- Ensuring the organisation maintains the resources, team level's, and infrastructure to deliver the Care Certificate effectively
- Ensuring HomeKare Community Services CQC registration is maintained and that evidence of Care Certificate compliance is available for inspection

Registered Manager

- Overall accountability for Care Certificate policy, procedure, and compliance
- Ensuring sufficient trained and competent assessors are always available
- Monitoring and reporting Care Certificate completion rates as part of monthly governance reporting
- Approving prior learning exemptions and documenting decisions
- Reviewing and updating this policy annually or following regulatory changes
- Ensuring Care Certificate content is kept current and aligned with the latest guidance from Skills for Care, NICE, and NSAB
- Taking action where Care Certificate completion is delayed, incomplete, or where standards have not been met

Care Manager

- Ensuring induction rotas allow new workers adequate supervised practice time
- Escalating scheduling conflicts that would prevent a new team member from completing supervised hours within the 12-week window
- Supporting the assignment of new team member's to appropriate assessors

HR and Compliance Lead

- Maintaining Care Certificate records in individual team member's files
- Tracking completion rates and flagging overdue assessments to the Registered Manager
- Supporting the annual Care Certificate compliance audit
- Coordinating training bookings and resource provision for Care Certificate delivery

Senior Team (as Assessors)

- Conducting supervised practice observations of new team member's across all 15 Care Certificate standards
- Completing and signing off the Care Certificate Competency Workbook for assigned new team member's
- Providing regular feedback to the new worker and Registered Manager on progress
- Escalating concerns about competency, conduct, or progress to the Registered Manager without delay
- Maintaining their own competency in the standards they assess
- Participating in assessor training provided by Homekare Community Services

Care Team (New Starters)

- Actively engaging with all elements of induction, training, and supervised practice
- Completing all workbook activities, knowledge checks, and reflective exercises within the agreed timescale
- Informing their assessor or the Registered Manager if they are experiencing difficulty with any standard
- Disclosing relevant prior qualifications or experience that may support prior learning exemption applications
- Working under supervision at all times until all 15 standards are signed off and they are declared competent

Procedure**1. The 15 Care Certificate Standards — Content Overview**

The following table sets out each of the 15 Care Certificate standards, the key learning required, and specific community care requirements applicable at Homekare Community Services:

Std	Title	Key Content for Community Care Setting
1	Understand Your Role	Role description; employment contract; Code of Conduct for Care team member's; accountability; professional boundaries; the difference between HomeKare Community Service expectations and statutory worker duties; organisational structure and reporting lines.
2	Your Personal Development	Individual learning needs; induction plan; supervised practice schedule; supervision frequency and format; reflective practice; identifying CPD goals; preparing for appraisal.
3	Duty of Care	Legal duty of care; dilemmas between duty of care and individual rights; complaints procedure; adverse incident reporting; advocacy; whistleblowing policy (including Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protections).
4	Equality and Diversity	Equality Act 2010 — nine protected characteristics; direct and indirect discrimination; reasonable adjustments; cultural competence in the home setting; challenging discriminatory attitudes.
5	Work in a Person-Centred Way	Person-centred approaches; consent principles and MCA 2005; care plan awareness; supporting wellbeing; promoting independence and choice; the individual's home as their own space. Aligned to NICE NG97 and Care Act s.1.
6	Communication	Verbal and non-verbal communication; communication support needs; confidential conversations in communal settings; accurate written records; digital care records; lone working communication protocols.
7	Privacy and Dignity	SCIE Dignity in Care Ten Point Challenge; maintaining privacy during personal care; respecting cultural and religious preferences; confidentiality of information; entering and respecting the client's home.
8	Fluids and Nutrition	Supporting individuals with eating and drinking; recognising malnutrition and dehydration risks; MUST tool awareness; reporting nutritional concerns; special dietary requirements; documentation of food and fluid intake.
9	Awareness of Mental Health, Dementia, and Learning Disabilities	Recognising signs of mental health conditions; person-centred dementia support (NICE NG108); communication with people with learning disabilities; positive risk; referral pathways to Registered Manager.

10	Safeguarding Adults	10 types of abuse (Care Act 2014); signs and indicators of each; duty to report; HomeKare Community Service reporting procedure; NSAB MASH referral route (0300 500 8080); Making Safeguarding Personal; MCA links; DoLS awareness; CQC whistleblowing line (03000 616161).
11	Safeguarding Children	Child abuse recognition; children in clients' households; reporting to Registered Manager; Nottinghamshire MASH (0300 500 8080); children's best interests; child protection plans.
12	Basic Life Support	CPR technique (adult); recovery position; recognition of deterioration; calling 999 from a service user's home; DNAR awareness; what to do if a client collapses or is unresponsive.
13	Health and Safety	HSWA 1974 worker duties; risk assessments in service users' homes; manual handling principles; COSHH — safe use of cleaning products and PPE; RIDDOR accident reporting; lone working safety procedures; fire safety in domestic settings; environmental hazards.
14	Handling Information	UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; confidentiality; Caldicott Principles; information sharing thresholds; care record accuracy; electronic vs paper records; data breach reporting to Registered Manager.
15	Infection Prevention and Control	Standard precautions (NICE NG209); hand hygiene technique and moments; PPE selection and donning/doffing; waste disposal in community settings; respiratory etiquette; outbreak recognition and reporting.

2. Care Certificate Procedure

2.1 Step 1 — Pre-Employment and Safer Recruitment

Before a new team member commences employment, the following must be in place:

- Enhanced DBS certificate obtained and verified
- References obtained and verified (minimum two, including most recent employer)
- Right to work documents verified
- Employment history confirmed with no unexplained gaps
- Occupational health assessment completed where applicable
- Contract of employment issued with induction schedule and Care Certificate requirements clearly stated

During the recruitment process, any previous Care Certificate or relevant qualifications must be declared. This information will be used to inform the prior learning assessment.

2.2 Step 2 — Induction Planning (Day 1–5)

The Registered Manager or designated Care Manager must complete the following within the first five working days of employment:

- Welcome and orientation meeting: introduce the new worker to HomeKare Community Service values, client's, and team
- Issue the Care Certificate Competency Workbook
- Assign a named assessor (Senior Team or Registered Manager)
- Agree and document the 12-week Care Certificate Completion Schedule
- Confirm supervision dates (minimum monthly for new team member's)
- Conduct an initial learning needs assessment: identify any prior experience, qualifications, or specific learning needs
- Ensure the new team member is registered on HomeKare Community Services training management system
- Issue any mandatory e-learning modules that can be completed during induction

Week	Induction Activity	Responsibility
Week 1	Orientation, HR documentation, health & safety induction, workplace tour, shadow senior care team on all calls	Registered Manager / Care Manager
Weeks 1–4	Structured supervised practice — team member observes and begins to practice tasks under direct supervision. Standards 1–7 workbook activities commenced.	Named Assessor
Weeks 4–8	Increasing independence in practice under close supervision. Standards 8–15 workbook activities commenced. Midpoint review at Week 6.	Named Assessor + Registered Manager
Weeks 8–12	Full supervised practice with assessor observations. All 15 standards being assessed. Final competency sign-off targeted for Week 12.	Named Assessor
Week 12	Final review meeting. All standards signed off or action plan agreed for outstanding items. Worker moves from supervised to independent practice.	Registered Manager

2.3 Step 3 — Delivery and Assessment Methods

Care Certificate delivery at HomeKare Community Services combines the following methods to ensure both knowledge and competency are assessed:

Method	Description	Standards Applicable
E-learning / online training	Skills for Care-aligned e-learning modules covering underpinning knowledge for each standard	All 15 standards — knowledge component
Face-to-face / classroom training	Group sessions covering manual handling, BLS, IPC, safeguarding, and fire safety delivered by trained trainers	Standards 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
Supervised practice observation	Assessor accompanies new worker on care calls and observes practice. Documented on observation record.	All 15 standards — practice component
Workbook activities	Written and reflective exercises completed in workbook to demonstrate knowledge and understanding	All 15 standards
Discussion and questioning	Assessor verbally explores understanding, asks scenario-based questions, reviews reflective accounts	All 15 standards — particularly 1, 3, 4, 9, 10
Professional discussion	Structured assessment conversation between team member and assessor to confirm competency across complex standards	Standards 3, 5, 9, 10, 14

2.4 Step 4 — Prior Learning Assessment

Where a new team member holds a previous Care Certificate, relevant qualification (Level 2 or above in health/social care), or can otherwise demonstrate prior learning equivalent to a specific standard, the Registered Manager must conduct a formal Prior Learning Assessment. The process is:

- Team member submits evidence of prior learning (certificate, workbook, qualification certificate) to the Registered Manager
 1. Registered Manager reviews evidence against the specific Care Certificate standard(s) claimed
 2. Where evidence is satisfactory, exemption is granted for the specific standard and documented on the Prior Learning Exemption Record
 3. Where evidence is insufficient or out of date (more than 3 years), the team member must complete the full standard

4. Prior Learning Exemption decision is retained in the team member's file alongside the evidence presented

Important:

A prior Care Certificate completion from a previous employer does not automatically exempt a team member from completing HomeKare Community Service's own Care Certificate assessment. The Registered Manager must be satisfied that the previous completion was robust, current, and relevant to the community care setting. Where doubt exists, the team member will be required to complete the full programme.

2.5 Step 5 — Midpoint Review (Week 6)

At the midpoint of the 12-week induction period, the assessor must hold a structured review meeting with the team member. This meeting must:

- Review progress against each of the 15 standards
- Identify any standards where competency has been achieved and can be signed off
- Identify any standards where the worker requires additional support, practice, or training
- Agree an action plan for completing outstanding standards within the remaining 6 weeks
- Be documented in the Care Certificate Competency Workbook
- Be reported to the Registered Manager

Where significant concerns about progress exist at Week 6, the Registered Manager must be informed immediately and a formal support plan agreed. Continued significant underperformance may trigger the capability process as per HomeKare Community Services HR procedures.

2.6 Step 6 — Final Assessment and Sign-Off (Week 12)

At the end of the 12-week induction period, the assessor must conduct a final assessment meeting. The assessor will:

- Review completed workbook activities for all 15 standards
- Confirm that sufficient supervised practice observations have been completed and documented
- Confirm that knowledge questions and professional discussions have been completed satisfactorily
- Sign off each completed standard in the Care Certificate Competency Workbook
- Notify the Registered Manager that the worker has completed the Care Certificate

The Registered Manager must countersign the completed Care Certificate Workbook to confirm that:

- The assessment process has been robust and consistent with this policy
- The assessor is competent to sign off the standards assessed
- The worker has been observed in practice — not just assessed on paper

- The completed workbook is retained in the team member's file

2.7 Step 7 — Outstanding Standards and Extensions

Where a team member has not completed all 15 standards within 12 weeks, the Registered Manager must:

- Hold a formal review meeting with the team member and assessor
- Agree an extension plan with clear timescales for each outstanding standard (maximum 4-week extension)
- Document the extension and reasons in the team member's file
- Ensure the team member continues to work under supervision until all outstanding standards are signed off
- Inform the Director if extensions become a pattern indicating systemic issues with induction delivery

Non-completion:

A team member who fails to complete the Care Certificate within 16 weeks (12 weeks plus maximum extension) must not continue in a frontline care role. The Registered Manager must take appropriate HR action, which may include further performance management or, in exceptional circumstances, termination of employment. Homekare Community Services cannot deploy team member's in CQC-regulated activity unless satisfied of their basic competency.

2.8 Step 8 — Declaration of Independent Practice

Once all 15 Care Certificate standards are signed off and the Registered Manager has countersigned the completed workbook, the team member is formally declared competent to work independently. The Registered Manager must:

- Issue a written confirmation to the team member that they have successfully completed the Care Certificate
- Record the completion date in the training management system
- Update the team member's individual training plan
- Brief the team member on their ongoing development obligations — supervision, appraisal, mandatory training refreshers
- Move the team member's status from 'supervised induction' to 'independent practitioner' in the rota and care management system

3. Care Certificate and Safeguarding — Standard 10 and 11 Specific Requirements

Given the critical importance of safeguarding in community care, Homekare Community Service places particular emphasis on the assessment and sign-off of Standards 10 and 11. These standards must not be signed off on the basis of e-learning alone.

Requirement	Detail
Knowledge assessment	Team member must be able to name all 10 categories of abuse defined in the Care Act 2014 and describe the signs and indicators of each in a community care context
Scenario-based assessment	Assessor must present at least two real-world scenarios and assess the team member's response — what they would do, who they would tell, and how quickly
Referral knowledge	Team member must be able to state without prompting: NSAB MASH number (0300 500 8080), Homekare Community Service internal reporting procedure, and the 24-hour referral timescale
Making Safeguarding Personal	Team member must demonstrate understanding of MSP — that the individual's wishes and desired outcomes are central to any safeguarding response
MCA and DoLS awareness	Team member must demonstrate understanding of the five MCA principles and awareness of what constitutes a potential deprivation of liberty in a community setting
Whistleblowing	Team member must understand their individual duty to report concerns even if a manager tells them not to — protected under PIDA 1998 and CQC reporting (03000 616161)
Children in households	Team member must be able to describe what to do if they have concerns about a child in a client's household — immediate reporting to Registered Manager and awareness that MASH handles both adult and children's referrals

4. Care Certificate and Health & Safety — Standard 13 Specific Requirements

Standard 13 (Health and Safety) must be delivered in the context of the community care environment. Generic health and safety training is insufficient. Assessment must cover Homekare Community Services-specific procedures and the domestic setting.

- Team member's must demonstrate understanding of their own duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (s.7 and s.8)
- Team member's must be able to read and follow a risk assessment specific to a client's home — not just a generic risk assessment
- Moving and handling must be assessed in practice, not just in theory — the assessor must observe the team member using correct techniques
- COSHH awareness must include specific reference to the products used at Homekare Community Services — assessor must review COSHH data sheets with the team member
- Lone working procedure must be covered in full — team member's must understand check-in procedures, what to do if they feel unsafe, and how to escalate

- RIDDOR — team member's must know to report all accidents, near-misses, and dangerous occurrences to the Registered Manager without delay
- Team member's must be able to identify environmental hazards in a client's home and know their duty to report and not proceed where risk is unacceptable

5. Records, Governance, and Audit

5.1 Required Records

The following records must be maintained for each team member who undertakes the Care Certificate at HomeKare Community Services:

Record	Location	Retention
Completed Care Certificate Competency Workbook (HK-CC-001) — all 15 standards signed off by assessor and countersigned by Registered Manager	Individual team member's file	Duration of employment plus 6 years
Care Certificate completion date entered in training management system	HR/Training system	Duration of employment
Prior Learning Exemption Record (where applicable)	Individual team member's file	Duration of employment plus 6 years
Supervised practice observation records	Individual team member's file	Duration of employment plus 6 years
Induction schedule and sign-off sheet	Individual team member's file	Duration of employment plus 6 years
Extension plan and supporting documentation (where applicable)	Individual team member's file	Duration of employment plus 6 years
Assessor competency records	Team file of assessor	Duration of employment plus 6 years

5.2 Governance and Reporting

Care Certificate compliance is a key workforce governance indicator at HomeKare Community Service. The following reporting cycle applies:

Reporting Item	Frequency	Reported To	Reference
% of new starters with Care Certificate completed within 12 weeks	Monthly	Registered Manager	Workforce KPI

% of total workforce with current and complete Care Certificate record	Monthly	Registered Manager	Workforce KPI
Any team member deployed unsupervised before Care Certificate sign-off	Immediate escalation	Director / Registered Manager	Not applicable
Care Certificate compliance rate — annual audit result	Annually	Director / Nominated Individual	Internal Audit Programme
Care Certificate compliance data for CQC inspection evidence file	Maintained at all times	Available to CQC on request	CQC Fundamental Standards — Reg 18

5.3 Annual Audit

The Registered Manager must conduct an annual Care Certificate compliance audit as part of the Internal Audit Programme. The audit will assess:

- Proportion of eligible new starters who completed the Care Certificate within 12 weeks in the audit period
- Quality of completed workbooks — are assessor observations documented? Are professional discussions recorded? Is there evidence of real practice assessment?
- Competency of assessors — do assessors have current knowledge of the standards they are signing off?
- Prior learning exemption decisions — are these documented and justified?
- Training content currency — has Care Certificate training content been reviewed since the last audit and updated to reflect any changes in guidance (NICE, NSAB, Skills for Care)?
- Action taken where workers failed to complete within timescale — has Homekare Community Service's procedure been followed?

6. Link to Wider Workforce Development

The Care Certificate is a baseline — not the ceiling. Completion of the Care Certificate must be connected to wider workforce development at Homekare Community Services:

Document / Process	Link to Care Certificate
Individual Training Plan	Upon Care Certificate completion, the team member's ITP is updated to reflect the next stage of development — moving from induction to ongoing mandatory training and CPD
Workforce Training Plan	Care Certificate delivery is the first phase of the workforce training plan. The WTP sets out the full training pathway beyond Care Certificate.

Supervision and Appraisal	Supervision during induction is used to monitor Care Certificate progress. First formal appraisal reviews Care Certificate completion and identifies development needs.
Mandatory Training Matrix	Following Care Certificate sign-off, team member's join the mandatory training refresh cycle — annual training requirements as set out in the training matrix.
QCF/NVQ Level 2 or 3 Progression	Workers who demonstrate aptitude and commitment are supported to progress to a level 2 or 3 qualification via the Workforce Development Fund.
Specialist Training	Workers supporting specific needs (dementia, learning disability, mental health, end of life) receive additional specialist training beyond the Care Certificate.

7. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

HomeKare Community Services is committed to delivering Care Certificate induction in a way that is equitable and accessible to all team member's, including those with:

- English as a second language — workbook activities and learning resources can be supplemented with interpreter support or translated materials where this is reasonably practicable
- Low literacy levels — assessors may complete workbook activities through verbal discussion and professional conversation, with evidence recorded in written form by the assessor
- Disabilities or specific learning needs — reasonable adjustments will be made to delivery method, timescales, and assessment format on a case-by-case basis
- Previous negative education experiences — a supportive, strengths-based approach will be taken in line with Skills for Care's PRISIM model

All adjustments made to Care Certificate delivery or assessment must be documented and approved by the Registered Manager. Adjustments do not lower the competency standard — they adjust how the standard is evidenced, not what is required.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually by the Registered Manager as part of the policy review cycle
- Following any significant change in Skills for Care Certificate standards
- Following any change in CQC inspection methodology relevant to workforce competency
- Following any NSAB update to multi-agency safeguarding procedures that affects Standard 10 or 11 content
- Following any NICE guideline update relevant to individual standards
- Following a serious incident, near-miss, or CQC inspection finding related to team member's competency

Linked Legislation and Guidance

Framework	Relevance
Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 — Regs 12, 13, 17, 18, 19	Fundamental Standards requiring competent staffing, good governance, safeguarding, and fitness for role. Care Certificate completion provides direct evidence of compliance.
Care Act 2014	Wellbeing principle and safeguarding duties. Standards 5, 9, 10, and 11 of the Care Certificate directly address Care Act obligations.
Mental Capacity Act 2005	Capacity principles embedded in Standards 5 and 10. Workers must understand the five MCA principles and their application in community care.
Equality Act 2010	Anti-discriminatory practice and protected characteristics underpins Standard 4 (Equality and Diversity).
Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR	Confidentiality, information sharing, and data handling obligations underpin Standard 14 (Handling Information).
Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated Regulations	Employer and worker duties underpin Standard 13 (Health and Safety) and Standard 15 (IPC).
Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998	Whistleblowing protections underpin Standards 3 (Duty of Care) and 10 (Safeguarding).
CQC Fundamental Standards and Single Assessment Framework	Care Certificate completion is assessed under the Safe and Effective inspection domains.
Skills for Care — Care Certificate Standards and Employer Guidance (2015, updated)	Authoritative framework for all 15 standards, assessment methodology, and employer obligations.
NICE NG97, NG108, NG67, NG209, NG189, NG21	Evidence-based standards embedded in individual Care Certificate standards.
SCIE — Dignity in Care, Making Safeguarding Personal, Induction Guidance	Best practice frameworks for delivery method, dignity (Standard 7), and safeguarding (Standard 10).
Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) Multi-Agency Procedures	Local safeguarding procedures embedded in Standards 10 and 11. Referral route: NSAB MASH 0300 500 8080.

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