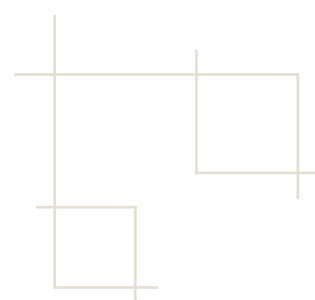


Endorsement Programme Prospectus



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Seeking out excellence: the endorsement programme

Where are we now?

Social care is a major industry employing 1.5 million people who enhance the quality of life for millions more.

The values of social care are the source of its strength and its great potential. Treating people with respect, enhancing their rights and dignity, and supporting people to have the lives they want is at the heart of what social care does.

So why is it that social care sometimes struggles to get recognition for the vital work that it does? Why do so many people fail to appreciate how many rewarding and fascinating careers can be built in the care sector?

There is a lot of excellent practice in care services. We know that it can be even better if the status of social care is improved and more people choose it as a positive career decision. Raising the status and changing the way in which work is organised and delivered requires excellent leadership and management as well as excellent people delivering front-line services. In order to deliver on all those aspects, we need to ensure that excellence can be found in the training and development that underpins how people work.

Employers tell us that they want to take on well-trained and committed people, and to develop their staff so that they can offer service users the best possible care. Yet they don't always know how to find training provision that will meet their needs at a time and place that fits with the work patterns of care delivery.

The world of education and training is confusing and complex, with changing qualifications, a range of funding available through a variety of different routes, and an array of badges and quality marks whose message is not always clear to employers.

The National Skills Academy for Social Care wants to cut through this complexity. We want to build the reputation and quality of social care by working with employers, training providers, learners and service users to build on the best practice that we know exists and encourage others to work towards excellence too.

This is why we are planning to endorse excellent training providers, training programmes, and learning support materials.

Where do we want to be?

We want to help to generate excellent care. We will play our part in this by building on what already exists in training and development and introducing a greater emphasis on strong and innovative leadership across the sector. We want to see the Skills Academy at the heart of a confident, capable and creative social care sector, supporting employers, staff and trainers to aspire to excellence.

It is the role and the vision of the Skills Academy to identify and build on practice that reflects the core values of social care. This means that we will work with all parts of the sector to describe and seek out excellence. It means we will help employers to train and develop their staff, and we will work with them to lead and deliver excellent care services.

It means we will make sure that employers know where to find excellent training and development for their staff by using our database of training providers. The database will have details of education and training providers and the qualifications and courses they deliver. It will show which quality marks the organisation holds, and whether they have met the National Skills Academy Core Criteria for Endorsement. It will also show which education providers have met the Excellence Standard and are recognised by the Skills Academy as Centres of Excellence in Social Care Training.

How will we get there?

We are going to work with all our partners and stakeholders to define and identify excellence wherever we can find it.

We have already developed a draft standard for excellence in training which you will find in this document. This Excellence Standard will be used identify Centres of Excellence in Social Care Training.

We will develop similar standards for individual training programmes and for learning support materials so that we can highlight excellence in those too.

In this way we will help the best training provision to be available for employers, for established staff, and for people who are entering work in social care for the first time. Our standards will apply as much to training for senior and experienced staff as they do for people seeking initial skills to bring them into the world of work. We will be seeking to define leadership qualities which can be developed and applied throughout the whole workforce.

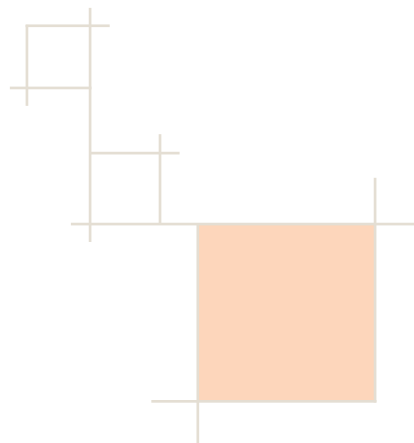
We will take this journey firm in our commitment to equality of access, to organisational and lifelong learning, to co-production and to the values which underpin the social model of care.

As you will see from the rest of this document, we have already started work on these activities. We will now start to test out what we have developed and hope to have endorsement processes in place for all three strands of activity early in 2010.

Between now and then, there will be plenty of opportunity for everyone to get involved by reviewing our documents, telling us what you think excellence looks like, and where you have found it, and registering to work towards becoming a Centre of Excellence. You can volunteer to test out our processes and contribute to our programme planning and review, or apply to have your organisation registered on our database of training providers.

Or you can simply spread the word about what we are trying to do, and keep in touch with us.

You can watch our progress by visiting our website: www.nsocialcare.co.uk



The Excellence Standard

The Excellence Standard for organisations delivering education and training in the Adult Social Care Sector

The Excellence Standard has been designed to complement other quality standards that are used throughout the further education sector. Employers have said that they would welcome a visible quality mark that will help them to find training providers who they know they can trust to deliver what they need, in the way and to the timescale that they need it. The National Skills Academy for Social Care Excellence Standard provides a means for education and training providers to demonstrate that they understand how to engage appropriately with employers and learners, provide a positive and supportive learning environment, and, in addition, that they can demonstrate how they do all this within the values and ethos of adult social care.

Education and training providers who meet the Excellence Standard will hold the National Skills Academy for Social Care's title of Centre of Excellence in Social Care Training. This status will allow the training provider to use the Skills Academy logo in publicity and marketing. It will indicate to employers looking for training that the provision offered by the Centre of Excellence has been judged to be of the highest quality. The criteria which make up the Excellence Standard have been developed in collaboration with employers in the social care sector, training providers, and people who use services.

The Excellence Standard is designed to be straightforward, and flexible, and to offer an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate their own way of working with employers, learners and service users, and to explain why and how they have found this to be effective.

The Excellence Standard should be read in conjunction with the Skills Academy's Core Criteria for endorsement. Organisations will not be allowed to apply to become a Centre of Excellence without first demonstrating that they have met the Core Criteria. Further details of the Core Criteria and means of demonstrating that these have been met, will be found on the Skills Academy's website: www.nsasocialcare.co.uk

The Excellence Standard consists of eight statements. Education and training providers need to show that their processes, practices and provision meet all of these statements. They will do this by preparing a self-evaluation document, which will be submitted to the Skills Academy for review by a panel of other training providers and employers. Reviewers will make a site visit to the training provider's premises, explore with the training provider any issues which are not clear from the self evaluation document, and to validate claims made by the training provider. Reviewers will then make a judgement about the training provider and their provision, and make a recommendation to the National Skills Academy regarding the award of the title Centre of Excellence in Social Care Training. An appeals process will allow the decision of the reviewers to be re-visited where necessary.

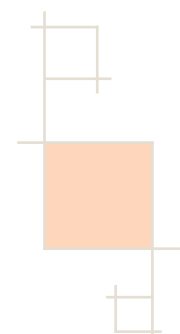
Full guidance on the application, review and appeals process will be found on the Skills Academy website: www.nsasocialcare.co.uk

The Excellence Standard criteria

In order to gain the Excellence Standard, training providers should demonstrate how their work in social care training meets the following criteria:

- a. Equality, diversity and inclusion is intrinsic to relationships with learners, the workforce, employers and communities and constitutes part of the continuous quality improvement targets for the organisation.
- b. Education and training providers' processes and practices provide a role model for the core values of a social model of care.
- c. Education and training providers' processes and practices, and in particular those relating to confidentiality and whistle-blowing, demonstrate adherence to the GSCC Codes of Practice¹.
- d. The needs of people who use services are placed at the heart of designs for training delivery.
- e. People who use services, and carers, are an integral part of the team who design, develop, deliver, assess and evaluate education and training provision.
- f. Education and training providers support the development and improvement of social care services and can demonstrate how their training provision makes a positive difference to the lives of people using services or needing support.
- g. Provision consistently promotes the potential of learning to benefit people emotionally, intellectually, socially and economically, and to contribute to community growth and sustainability.
- h. Education and training providers work towards enhancing social care as a positive career choice and celebrate the achievements of their learners.

¹ Describes 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.
www.gsc.org.uk



The core criteria for endorsement

Employers have said that they would welcome a visible quality mark that will help them to find training providers who they know they can trust to deliver what they need, in the way and to the timescale that they need it.

The National Skills Academy for Social Care has developed a means of endorsing education and training providers, based on evidence that they are working efficiently and effectively in managing their own organisations, and in working with learners, employers and service users in the care sector.

The Core Criteria for endorsement are designed to be straightforward, and flexible, and to offer an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate their own way of working with employers, learners and service users, and to explain why and how they have found this to be effective.

The Core Criteria represent a distillation of a range of other quality marks which are in common use across the further education sector. These are the Training Quality Standard, the Common Inspection Framework, Matrix, and Investors in People. Organisations holding these standards may gain credit towards the Skills Academy's Core Criteria for endorsement. The Core Criteria also reference Framework for Excellence, Investors in Quality and Skillsmark².

There are six dimensions to the Core Criteria for endorsement.

- Leadership and Management
- Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement
- Resource Management
- Staff Development
- Working with Learners
- Working with Employers

Education and training providers will need to provide evidence that they meet each of the criteria within each of the dimensions in order to meet the Core Criteria for endorsement. However, as the criteria are derived from other quality marks, organisations that hold those marks will be credited for those parts of the Core Criteria that have been evidenced in gaining those quality marks. For instance, organisations holding the Training Quality Standard will not need to demonstrate their ability to meet the Skills Academy Core Criteria on working with employers.

Where cross-referencing of this type is relevant, it is signposted in the text of the Core Criteria.

The Core Criteria for endorsement form a platform for training providers to work towards gaining the Skills Academy Excellence Standard, and becoming a Centre of Excellence in Social Care Training. The criteria for the Excellence Standard can be found on the Skills Academy website: www.nsocialcare.co.uk

² For further details of these quality marks, please see our 'Quality Marks Explained' document on the Skills Academy website

In order to gain endorsement from the Skills Academy, training providers will submit a self-evaluation document to demonstrate how they meet each of the Core Criteria. This document will be submitted to the National Skills Academy for Social Care for review by a panel drawn from other training providers. Where credit is awarded on the basis of existing quality marks held by the provider, no further evidence will be required for that section of the Core Criteria. However, where there is no prior evidence, the training provider will need to demonstrate how they meet the criteria, signposting sources of evidence as appropriate. It is unlikely that each submission will result in a site visit, but the Skills Academy or its designated agents will correspond with training providers to clarify points within the submission and will visit a sample of training providers each year. An appeals procedure will be established for cases where there is disagreement between the training provider and the reviewers.

Further information and guidance documents will be found on the Skills Academy website: www.nsasocialcare.co.uk

Core criteria

1. Leadership and management

(Organisations achieving a grade 1 or 2 in their latest Ofsted review will receive automatic credit for this section)

- a. Leaders set a clear direction for the organisation leading to high quality education and training and a continuous improvement cycle
- b. Aims and approaches are regularly communicated to all appropriate stakeholders and developed in response to their input
- c. Managers are effective in leading, supporting and developing people who provide and assist with the organisation's training programme delivery

2. Quality Assurance and Improvement

(Organisations achieving a grade 1 or 2 in their latest Ofsted review will receive automatic credit for this section)

- a. The strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined, with specific, measurable and time-based (SMART) performance objectives, and disseminated to, and understood by all stakeholders
- b. Continuous quality improvement is ensured through a documented monitoring, evaluation and action cycle
- c. Quality assurance systems ensure implementation of policies and practices
- d. Policies and practices ensure high quality programme design and delivery
- e. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making
- f. Indicators of organisational performance against strategic objectives show an improving trend or a sustained high level of performance
- g. The impact on the care sector of training provision is measured and evaluated
- h. Education and training providers learn by reflection and evaluation continually to improve their own professional and organisational development

3. Resource management

(Organisations achieving a grade 1 or 2 in their latest Ofsted review will receive automatic credit for this section)

- a. The resources used to arrange and deliver education and training meet care sector expectations
- b. Training materials and equipment, training venues and specialist equipment are of a high quality and sufficient to meet the needs of all learners
- c. A safe, healthy, accessible and supportive environment is provided for learners

4. Staff development

(Organisations holding TQS Part B and/or Investors in People will receive automatic credit for this section)

- a. Staff learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives
- b. The learning and development of the organisation's people is designed to enhance the delivery of training and education programmes
- c. The people arranging, delivering and assessing training and education have the knowledge and skills to meet care sector expectations, and hold appropriate qualifications
- d. Staff maintain their vocational competence in both teaching, learning and assessment, and care services delivery

5. Working with learners

(Organisations holding a current Matrix award and/or achieved a grade 1 or 2 in their latest Ofsted inspection will receive automatic credit for this section.)

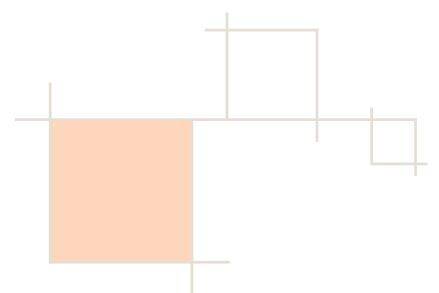
- a. Learners, potential learners and those supporting them are made aware of the training service and how to engage with it
- b. Learners are provided with access to information about their programme and support in using it
- c. Programmes are accessible and underpinned by equality of opportunity in line with the identified needs, interests and aptitudes of learners, including their prior learning and experience
- d. Education and training providers respect and respond to all learners' aspirations, goals and development, and the experience they bring to their learning and to other people
- e. Learners are actively involved in the evaluation of training programmes and their contribution to personal development as well as the way it has/will improve the quality of life for the users of care services.
- f. Appropriate progression opportunities are available for learners

- g. Education and training providers show evidence of working towards and/or maintaining high levels of retention, completion and achievement
- h. Education and training providers collaborate and network with all other individuals, groups and organisations with a legitimate interest in the progress and development of learners.

6. Working with employers

(Organisations holding the Training Quality Standard will receive automatic credit for this section)

- a. The aims and approaches of the organisation are communicated to all employers and appropriate stakeholders
- b. The strategy for working with employers is based on an analysis of the market and key customer groups in the care sector
- c. Input is sought from sector employers on their expectations for training solutions and business needs
- d. Input is sought from appropriate employers and stakeholders to share good practice and improve understanding of the care sector's business needs
- e. Training provision is developed and delivered to sector expectations and employers' business needs
- f. Contracts with employers define specific measurable and time-based performance objectives for training delivery
- g. Employers and other stakeholders are actively involved in the evaluation of the impact of training delivery on business development and the quality of life for the users of care services.





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This prospectus will be available
in easi-read format and will be
downloadable from our website