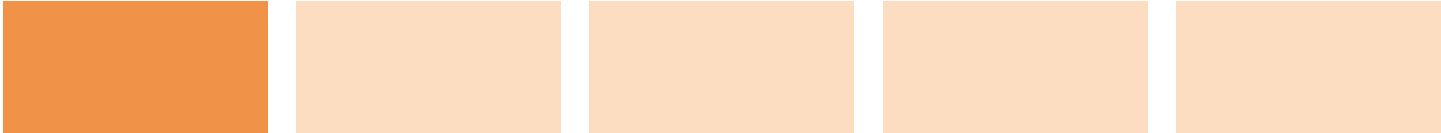


Endorsement Framework

FOR ORGANISATIONS

Stage 1 Recognition Guide



Endorsing excellence in social care education and training
organisations

Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Stage 1 Recognition dimensions and statements	Page 6
An explanation of the dimensions and statements	Page 8

Introduction

WHY WE NEED AN ENDORSEMENT FRAMEWORK

Adult social care is a growth sector with over 40,000 employers employing over 1.75 million people, who enhance the quality of life for millions more. Treating people with respect, enhancing their rights and dignity and supporting them to have the lives they want are the values that lie at the heart of social care.

At a time when employers are facing financial pressure, the need for assurance on the quality of training purchased is all the more needed. This is what the Skills Academy's Endorsement Framework delivers with its clear badge of identification for endorsed training providers.

The Framework was born of a need from employers in the sector who needed to know they were using their resources to maximum effect and wanted a way to navigate through the minefield of selecting and purchasing quality training.

Gaining endorsement by the Skills Academy will give training providers market share and advantage and will give employers assurance that excellence is established and demonstrated in the training available to them.

EXCELLENT CARE BEGINS WITH EXCELLENT TRAINING

When we think of excellence, we think of something outstanding, a model of its kind, the very best there is.

When employers and learners begin looking for training, they want to know that what they buy or commission is the best possible choice.

One way of ascertaining this is to look for some form of independent validation, whether that is awards, accolades, others' experience, ratings or quality assurance marks. Gaining Skills Academy endorsement immediately indicates that your training provision is exemplary – specifically designed for the needs of social care employers and learners.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING ENDORSED

Gaining Recognition and the Excellence Award brings significant benefits to organisations including:

- Details of your organisation will be published on a Skills Academy database
- Employers looking for training will be able to select from a list of provision which has been through a sector-specific quality assurance process
- You will also be able to use the relevant Skills Academy quality mark on marketing and publicity materials for programmes which have been endorsed
- Commissioners of training will know that if they come to you, they will receive the best possible product.

Organisations holding the Excellence Award will also have automatic membership of the Skills Academy. This will give a range of advantages:

- Status as a preferred organisation for development projects and pilot activities
- Mentoring and support opportunities



RECOGNISED PROVIDER



EXCELLENT PROVIDER



EXCELLENT PROGRAMME

- Involvement in development of new materials or programmes
- Networking opportunities with other excellent providers and with employers
- Opportunities to contribute to debates and strategic developments
- Opportunities to attend Skills Academy events and seminars.

OVERVIEW

This guide introduces the route to Recognition for organisations, and has been written to help education and training providers understand the dimensions, the requirements for submission, and to consider how they can provide evidence that they meet all the statements contained within the dimensions.

The Recognition dimensions 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 Skills Academy Recognition dimensions provide a way for education and training providers to demonstrate that they:

- Have a well-run organisation with sound leadership and management
- Make effective use of staff and resources
- Engage appropriately with employers and learners
- Provide a positive and supportive learning environment.

The Recognition dimensions 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.

These dimensions are derived from a range of other quality marks which are in common use across the further education sector. These are the Training Quality Standard, the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework, Matrix and Investors in

People¹. Organisations holding these quality marks may gain credit through a fast track towards Skills Academy's Recognition. Other quality regimes, such as Framework for Excellence, Investors in Quality, and Skillsmark have also informed the Recognition dimensions and the endorsement process.

There are six Recognition dimensions:

1. Leadership and management
2. Quality assurance and quality improvement
3. Resource management
4. Staff development
5. Working with learners
6. Working with employers.

Education and training providers will need to provide evidence that they meet each of the statements within each of the dimensions in order to achieve Skills Academy Recognition. This may be done either by demonstrating that you already hold the relevant quality standards (for example, organisations holding the Training Quality Standard will not need to demonstrate their ability to meet the Skills Academy Recognition dimension on working with employers), or it may be done by producing a self-evaluation against each of the statements, with accompanying evidence. Or you may use a combination of both – i.e. you may fast track through some sections for which you have appropriate quality marks and provide evidence for the other sections where you cannot offer prior accreditation.

This matching of quality marks against the Recognition dimensions can lead to a Fast Track route to Recognition. Where cross-referencing to

other standards is relevant, it is indicated in the text of the Recognition dimensions.

Skills Academy Recognition is an end in itself, and can be used by education and training providers to demonstrate the high quality of their training. Alternatively, the dimensions can be used for organisational or staff development, encouraging the implementation of activities and processes that underpin high quality training provision.

Recognition can also be used as a platform from which to work towards gaining the Skills Academy Excellence Award. Organisations which have demonstrated that they meet all the Recognition dimensions are able to apply to become a Centre of Excellence in adult social care training, by demonstrating how they meet the Skills Academy's Excellence dimensions and gaining the Excellence Award.

The Excellence Award confers the title of Centre of Excellence in Adult Social Care Training and gives automatic membership of the Skills Academy. The Excellence Award dimensions can be found on the Skills Academy website.

Stage 1 Recognition dimensions and statements

1. Leadership and management

(Organisations subject to Ofsted inspection who received an overall grade 1 or 2 in their latest 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 the people who provide and assist with the organisation's training programme delivery.

2. Quality assurance and improvement

(Organisations subject to Ofsted inspection who received an overall grade 1 or 2 in their latest 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 to improve their own professional and organisational development.

3. Resource management

(Organisations subject to Ofsted inspection who received an overall grade 1 or 2 in their latest 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 the Training Quality Standard Part B in Adult Social Care or Health and Social Care, 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 having achieved a grade 1 or 2 in their latest Ofsted inspection will receive automatic credit for this section.)

- F. Learners, potential learners and those supporting them are made aware of the training service and how to engage with it.
- G. Learners are provided with access to information about their programme and support in using it.
- H. 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.
- I. 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.
- J. 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.
- K. Appropriate progression opportunities are available for learners.

- L. Education and training providers show evidence of working towards and/or maintaining high levels of retention, completion and achievement.
- M. 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.

An explanation of the dimensions and statements

1. Leadership and management

(Organisations subject to Ofsted inspection who received an overall grade 1 or 2 in their latest 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 the people who provide and assist with the organisation's training programme delivery.

What does this mean?

In order to provide effective training, organisations should themselves have systems and processes which demonstrate effective leadership and management. These should operate with clear aims and targets which are consistent with the mission and values of the organisation and relevant local, regional and national priorities.

Organisations should also involve their staff and enable them to contribute to all aspects of preparing for application. This principle mirrors the values which underpin best practice in social care, where the people who use the services are the driving force behind service delivery. Collaboration and partnership with other key stakeholders, such as other training providers, adult social care employers and funding and other agencies will also contribute to the development of the training organisation, and will in turn promote the enhancement of learning.

Things you may wish to consider in addressing these statements

- What is the mission of your organisation and how do you publicise it?
- Who are your key audiences in relation to the adult social care sector and how does your corporate plan reflect this?
- What systems do you have in place to communicate with your key audiences?
- How do you ensure effective contributions from your staff in the development of your organisation in relation to your teaching in social care?
- How is a clear direction in relation to teaching in social care set by leaders and managers at all levels of your organisation?
- How do you measure the effectiveness of leaders and managers in relation to social care teaching?
- How do you measure the impact of your staff recruitment and development policy?

2. Quality assurance and improvement

(Organisations subject to Ofsted inspection who received an overall grade 1 or 2 in their latest 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 to improve their own professional and organisational development.

What does this mean?

Quality assurance and quality improvement are key to understanding and responding to the changing environment in both teaching and learning and in social care. They require both formal and informal activities to ensure planning, monitoring and review are focused on relevant activities and measured against appropriate targets. The process of reflection and self-evaluation, and capturing qualitative (what people think and feel) as well as quantitative (numerical and statistical) data all contribute to ensuring that high quality provision is maintained and enhanced.

Things you may wish to consider

- What evidence do you have that your quality assurance systems contribute to continuous quality improvement?
- Which policies and key processes support the design and delivery of education and training in adult social care?

- What mechanisms do you use to ensure that teams, departments and the whole organisation, and its stakeholders are included in your self assessment cycle?
- How do you capture learner and employer feedback, and what use do you make of this information?
- How do your retention, achievement and success rates compare with organisational targets, national averages or other relevant benchmarks?
- What evidence do you have of maintaining or improving trends in retention and achievement?
- How do you monitor and evaluate effectiveness in relation to the mission, aims and objectives of your organisation?

3. Resource management

(Organisations subject to Ofsted inspection who received an overall grade 1 or 2 in their latest 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.

What does this mean?

Education and training in adult social care is expected to meet the changing environment in which care services are delivered. This means that learners should have access to learning environments that mirror the varied contexts in which they may work – for example residential care homes, day care centres, or the personal home of an individual they are learning to support.

Training providers have a range of ways of ensuring access to this range of learning and working environments. Some have physical resources for practising skills, some use simulation and learning technologies, others deliver training on employers' premises or work in collaboration with other providers to share resources.

Whatever the model of training, it is essential that the learning environment meets the highest level of health and safety requirements, reflects the level and type of resources which are available in the workplace, and that the level of accessibility to learning is such that all learners have equal access to learning and learning support.

Things you may wish to consider

- A. What steps do you take to ensure that the learning resources used to deliver training are appropriate in terms of availability, quality and currency?
- B. How do you manage the process of updating or renewing resources for education and training in adult social care?
- C. How are staff development needs met in order to enable them to operate or work with new equipment or know and understand relevant changes in policy relating to adult social care?
- D. How do you manage the process of risk assessment in relation to the learning environment for adult social care learners?
- E. What safeguards do you have in place to assess health and safety issues arising from delivery of training on employers' premises?
- F. How do you ensure that you have access to appropriate training resources to meet the needs of learners in a range of working contexts?
- G. What processes are in place to enable you to record and act on learners' suggestions for an improved learning environment?

4. Staff development

(Organisations holding the Training Quality Standard Part B in Adult Social Care or Health and Social Care, 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.

What does this mean?

Training people to work in the adult social care sector means preparing people to work with some of society's most vulnerable people. The way in which support is delivered and funded is subject to continuous change, and learners and employers need to know that people involved in training understand the implications of these changes for people working in the sector. A set of values based on equality of opportunity and user-led provision underpins work in the sector, and it is important that these are not only taught and discussed, but are modelled by staff involved in training.

Qualifications in teaching, learning and assessing are an indication that staff supporting learners are occupationally competent as teachers/tutors and trainers. This expertise should be matched by experience and knowledge that relates to adult social care. The training organisation should be committed to supporting staff to meet these dual sets of occupational competence.

Things you may wish to consider

- What commitment does your strategic plan make to maintaining the competence of staff both as teachers and as practitioners in the field of adult social care?
- What minimum standards does your staff recruitment policy set in terms of appropriate qualifications and experience for those involved in the delivery and assessment of learning programmes in adult social care?
- What provision is made in your staff development policy for the induction of new staff, and continuing professional development?
- How often do you carry out observations of teaching and assessment practice, including that taking place on employers' premises or in service users' own homes, in order to give feedback to staff which will lead to practice improvement?
- How does teaching observation link to your appraisal system?
- How are staff involved in reviewing their own performance and identifying their own training and development needs?

5. Working with learners

(Organisations holding a current Matrix award and/or having 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.

What does this mean?

How you work with learners is a central feature of education and training provision. Just as people who use services are the people who both drive and benefit from social care services, so learner wellbeing and satisfaction should be at the heart of your activities. Again, in common with people who use services, learners are individuals who have their own needs, and cannot be bracketed together as a homogenous group for administrative convenience.

It therefore follows that every aspect of your service for learners — from programme planning, design, marketing and delivery through to assessment and progression — should be focused on the needs of the individual learner and how you can identify and meet those needs.

Things you may wish to consider

- How does your promotional activity and material give learners information about your provision and about how they can access it?

- What do you do to ensure that anyone who wants to access your provision is able to do so?
 - How do you ensure the currency of your promotional material?
 - What forms of support do you offer people with a range of different learning needs to access and benefit from your provision?
 - What initial guidance and support do you offer learners?
 - How are learners informed of their entitlement?
 - What access or other enabling provision do you make to support learners with specific needs?
 - How is provision for individual learners tailored to their previous experience and, learning and to their aspirations?
 - What processes do you have to gather the opinions of learners about the provision you offer and take these opinions into account in planning future provision?
 - How do you collaborate with other training providers or stakeholders to ensure that learners have the widest range of opportunities open to them?
 - How is learner support provided to maintain or improve retention and progression?
 - How are feedback and assessment used to help learners improve and progress?
- 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.

What does this mean?

Working with employers is essential if the needs of learners and, through them, the needs of people who use services are to be met. Employers in adult social care come in many forms — for example, local authorities, residential homes, day care centres, supported living environments and, increasingly, individuals employing their own staff. They may be voluntary organisations, or private or publicly funded.

Your organisation may only work with a particular segment of the sector, but you should be aware of the pressures and interests of the employers with whom you work. You will work with them to identify how training can help them meet their employment and business needs. Your approach is likely to be proactive and make use of all the training resources available to meet the changing contexts in which employers work, and be based on current occupational standards and codes of practice.

Things you may wish to consider

- How do you identify and define the adult social care employers with whom you intend to work?

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.

- How does your strategy for working with employers fit with your organisation's mission statement and values?
- How do you involve employers in reviewing and updating your strategy?
- What is the relationship between your strategy for working with employers and local and regional priorities and needs?
- How is the work you carry out for employers influenced by people who use services?
- What use do you make of national or regional policy documents when planning your programmes to meet employer needs?
- How do you gather information about the impact of learning through your programmes?
- How do you gather and use employer satisfaction data?
- How do you manage your teaching and assessment staff to meet the needs of the sector (e.g. night working)?

You will find detailed guidance on how to apply and how we review applications in the 'Endorsement Handbook' on the National Skills Academy website at www.nsasocialcare.co.uk