

Focus on the Care Certificate

April 2015

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The GPC has received some concerns about funding for the Care Certificate and whether it is a CQC mandatory requirement.

Background

Following the [Cavendish Review](#)¹ (July 2013), which found that the preparation of healthcare assistants and social care support workers was inconsistent, Health Education England, Skills for Care and Skills for Health worked together to develop the Care Certificate. It contains 15 standards and outlines what healthcare assistants should know and be able to deliver in their daily jobs.

The intention of the Care Certificate is to standardise the training for healthcare assistants before they are able to practise without direct supervision. It replaces the Common Induction Standards (CIS) and National Minimum Training Standards (NMTS). The Care Certificate will be introduced in April 2015 and will only be for healthcare assistants starting a new role. It is expected that for full-time staff it will take 12 weeks for the healthcare assistant to show all the necessary competencies and knowledge.

CQC

CQC have published a [press release](#)² and a [position statement](#)³ on the Care Certificate. They see it as “‘best practice’ for the induction of new healthcare assistants and social care support workers”. In their [guidance for providers on how to meet the regulations](#)⁴ they state that providers must ensure that they have an induction programme that prepares staff for their role. It is expected that those who employ healthcare assistants should be able to demonstrate that staff have, or are working towards, the skills set out in the Care Certificate, as the benchmark for staff induction. CQC do not expect all providers to have this in place on 1 April but they believe it is reasonable to expect providers to be implementing the new standards by the autumn.

GPC Position

The Care Certificate is referenced under Regulation 18 on Staffing and Regulation 19 on fit and proper persons employed. Practices have a legal duty to ensure that their health care assistants receive appropriate support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal as is necessary to enable them to carry out the duties they are employed to perform. Whilst the Care Certificate is not the only way to demonstrate this, CQC will see it as nationally recognised good practice. Practices would need to be sure that any alternative process was fit for purposes to ensure they fulfilled legal/CQC requirements.

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/236212/Cavendish_Review.pdf

² <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/cqc-welcomes-launch-care-certificate-april>

³ http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20150318_one_page_cqc_position_care_certificate.pdf

⁴<http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20150311%20Guidance%20for%20providers%20on%20meeting%20the%20regulations%20FINAL%20FOR%20PUBLISHING.pdf>

Given this, the GPC believes that the Care Certificate is likely to be the best choice for the majority of practices to evidence to CQC that their healthcare assistants are properly trained. The GPC also supports the Care Certificate as a measure to standardise and improve training for healthcare assistants and, ultimately, to improve the care of patients.

However, if the Care Certificate creates additional, unnecessary work for practices above the duties already required to train healthcare assistants, at a time when GPs are under severe workload pressure, then the GPC would question the value of the Care Certificate as proposed.

Next steps

Our advice is that practices should follow the guidance issued by Health Education England on the Care Certificate. However, where practices find that this is either a financial or workload burden, beyond the training healthcare assistants would have needed before the introduction of the Care Certificate, they should email the GPC Secretariat (info.gpc@bma.org.uk) giving specific examples of how this exercise is adversely affecting them, so that concerns can be taken back to Health Education England.

Further information on the Care Certificate is available on the [Health Education England website⁵](#), including a Guidance and Framework documents for assessors.

⁵ <http://hee.nhs.uk/work-programmes/the-care-certificate-new/>