

Guide to Becoming a Carer



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**What is a
homecare worker?**

What is a homecare worker?



A homecare worker is someone that visits or lives in a vulnerable adult's own home to provide support and help for them. Having a homecare worker allows the elderly or disabled adult to stay in the comfort and familiarity of their home instead of relocating to residential care or a care home to live safely.



The terms care worker, carer, care giver, care assistant, domiciliary worker and many others are often interchangeable terms for people who provide support for vulnerable people. Those who need a carer are often either elderly, living with a disability or long-term illness, or are at end-of-life.

This guide offers a comprehensive explanation of everything you need to know about becoming and working as a professional carer. In this guide, we will focus on the role of live-in carers and visiting carers (often called daily carers or domiciliary carers)

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Professional and unpaid carers

Most carers in the UK are not paid. There are over 1.6 million care jobs in the UK*, however, there could be up to 9.1 million people providing unpaid care in some form each year**. They are usually friends and family of a vulnerable adult. This is often the first port of call when a family member needs additional help and support around the home.

Unpaid carers could be a neighbour, who regularly pops by to provide companionship, to a spouse that is providing full-time personal care. Unpaid carers are sometimes entitled to some form of benefit or payment from local authorities. Depending on the condition of the person who needs support, social services can provide a paid carer to support the unpaid carer.

Paid carers are paid for the professional work they do. They are either paid by the care provider they are employed by or they are paid directly by a private client or their representative if they are a self-employed carer. Either way, they usually work to a set number of hours a day, or week.

*The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce 2021 (skillsforcare.co.uk)

**Carers Week Research Report 2020 (carersuk.org)



The role of a carer

There are many types of professional homecare jobs available at any given time and the sector is generally always recruiting. There is a broad variety of tasks that a paid carer could undertake on a day-to-day basis. These will depend on factors such as working hours (full-time, hourly, or overnight) and the individual needs of the client.

Regardless of their needs however, a client will always expect a carer to support them with compassion and treat them like they would a member of their own family.

It was estimated that there were over 1.67m jobs in adult social care in the UK in 2020/21. In comparison there are 1.3m jobs in the NHS.

SKILLSFORCARE.ORG.UK

A rewarding career

A career in care can give people some of the most rewarding days at work they will ever have. As with many vocations, carers are always learning and improving their skills, and no two days are the same.

An employed care worker will often enjoy working with like-minded people in a company whose primary duty is that of care; so, they will often care for their staff just as much as they do their clients. As with any job, not every day is going to be easy. Some days can be hard work and tiring. Alongside knowledge, skills, and experience, great carers have intrinsic personal qualities that make them right for the job, such as resilience, compassion, and above all a caring nature.

**Types of
homecare workers**

Types of homecare workers



In this section we will look at the different roles a homecare worker can fulfil, which vary depending on the shift patterns worked, the level and type of care provided, and finally the way in which a care worker is employed.

General types of carer

There are two basic homecare models: live-in care and visiting care (also called daily care, hourly care, or domiciliary care). Because these models are very different, those starting a career in care will generally specialise and work as one or the other but can do both depending on desired shift pattern and previous experience.

Visiting carers

Visiting care is a service whereby a client requires a carer to visit them for just a few hours a day or a week for companionship or for help around the house. This could be for several reasons such as aiding getting in or out of bed or accompaniment to appointments. This service is provided by a visiting carer who will work with multiple clients over the course of a single week.

Visiting carers will usually live in their own home and find their own way to the clients' homes.

Live-in carers

Live-in care is typically where the client requires a higher level of support, and a carer is needed to be in their home all day. The live-in carer will live and work in the client's home. They will be provided with their own bedroom to get the rest they need.

A live-in care client will need full-time care or companionship during the day but may also require some additional support during the night. If the client has very high needs, more than one live-in carer may be needed, or a combination of live-in and visiting care may be present. Live-in carers will get to know the client and their family well.

Employed and self-employed carers

The next main difference in carer roles is whether a carer is employed by a care company or whether they are self-employed.

Self-employed carers

Being a self-employed carer, like with any self-employed roles, offers more freedom, but also increased risks. A self-employed carer can have more control over what opportunities they do and don't take, and how often.

As is the nature of self-employment however, a carer operating on their own won't be entitled to holiday pay, a company pension scheme, PAYE entitlement, or representation and all the benefits that come with employment. Self-employed individuals will also incur additional tasks such as accounting and keeping their training up to date at their own expense. Self-employed carers can acquire clients privately or they can work with introductory care agencies who match clients with self-employed carers.

Benefits of being self-employed:

- Full choice over clients
- Earnings directly linked to hours worked, with high earnings potential
- Full flexibility of hours and days worked
- Carer can stay with the same client for longer

Drawbacks of being self-employed:

- Additional administrative duties such as tax returns
- No company sick pay or holiday pay entitlement
- Generally, will need to pay for their own training

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Employed carers

Employed carers will have signed a contract of employment with a care company; this company is required by law to be regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) if they are providing any personal care. For visiting carers, the contract should stipulate the expected hours of work per week and the company should make every effort to assign the carer enough clients to meet these hours.

Employment contracts can range from zero-hours contracts to full-time work. Most care companies will still offer a degree of flexibility whilst being employed if the carer needs to increase or decrease their hours. However, an applicant should always be honest with their employer before starting regarding their availability and how much they want to work.

Benefits of being employed:

- Can often start work with less direct care experience (as basic training is provided)
- Holiday entitlement can be accrued
- Tax and NI paid automatically
- Sick pay (depending on employer)
- No need to source private client base
- Travel time and cost can be paid by employer
- Possible Bonus and Reward schemes
- Free uniforms often provided
- Potential for career progression
- Basic and advanced training can be provided

Drawbacks of being employed:

- Less choice of assignments
- Depending on carer availability, clients may change at short notice

Overnight carers

A carer that works during the day needs to get a full night's sleep to be able to effectively work the following day. A lot of elderly, ill, and disabled adults are unable to sleep for a full night and may require some level of support during the night. This is where an overnight carer may be required.

Types of overnight carers

Waking nights whereby the carer is expected to remain awake all night and sleep during the day and sleeping nights where the carer is expected to be asleep most of the night, but on call should they be needed.

Typically, a waking nights carer can expect to be paid more than a sleeping nights carer as they are awake and working during unsociable hours. This increased cost is usually passed onto the client.

Some care companies and agencies will look specifically for overnight carers, and others will delegate overnight shifts to carers on their books who are happy to work these

shifts. Legally, all employers should ensure they are scheduling in a certain number of rest hours away from work before a carer who has worked an overnight shift can work another shift.

It is a very flexible role that takes many forms: there are employed and self-employed overnight carers, as well as visiting and live-in overnight carers.





Specialised carers

As a care worker develops their skillset and gains experience working with different clients or attending training courses, they will acquire the ability to better support clients with specific requirements, disabilities, or illnesses.

This gives them the ability to care for a greater variety of clients, as opposed to caring for a more advanced specific type of client. However, a carer may decide that they are better suited to working with clients with particular needs.

Dementia carers

It is estimated that over 850,000 people in UK live with dementia*. Dementia is caused by several diseases that affect the brain, such as Alzheimer's. Symptoms can include memory loss, difficulty concentrating, disorientation, problems with speech, and the inability to control motor and bodily functions. Caring for dementia clients in their home can help them live better and slows the deterioration by keeping them in familiar surroundings. A dementia carer will

be specifically trained in how to support those with dementia.

*Dementia Information (england.nhs.uk)

Companionship carers

Loneliness is an increasing issue in the ageing population of the UK and a companionship carer can help greatly.

There are many volunteer services in the UK that people can sign up to befriend an elderly person, however, there are still plenty of opportunities for professional carers to offer this service. Companionship may include care in someone's own home, helping them attend events, complete daily errands, or even accompany them on holiday.

Respite carers

Respite care gives the primary care giver a break and a chance to recharge. Respite care offers the carer a chance to work with many different clients on one-off visits or live-in stays.

Palliative carers

Palliative care, also known as end-of-life care, supports clients who are terminally ill or near to passing away. This can be a visiting or a live-in role. They should also be able to emotionally support friends and family. They may also have to work closely with medical professionals.

Physical disability carers

This can cover a broad range of physical conditions from cerebral palsy to those who have suffered from a serious accident or injury. This can be a very physical care role as the client is often mentally capable but cannot complete daily tasks easily on their own, such as getting in and out of bed or leaving the house. Those living with disabilities often require emotional support too to help them with their mental wellbeing.

Other specialist care roles can include:

- Convalescence carer
- Parkinson's carer
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS) carer
- Bariatric carer





**Role of a
live-in carer**

Live-in carers



A live-in carer is with a client all day and on hand to deliver personal care, help with household chores and to support the client in the comfort of their own home.

Above all else, a live-in carer is there to provide companionship and emotional support. Common conditions that might require someone to need a live-in carer include dementia, frailty from old age, and disabilities such as cerebral palsy.

Each live-in care role is as different as the client being looked after. The fact that the carer lives with the client will usually mean that their needs are reasonably high and therefore there will likely be a lot of support needed.

As the name suggests, a live-in carer lives in the clients home. Although they are living with the client all the time, a live-in carer does not work 24 hours a day and should have agreed shifts and breaks

Different tasks undertaken by a live-in carer can include:

- Personal Care
- Household chores
- Cooking meals
- Morning and evening routines
- Help client to move around
- Shopping and other errands
- Reminding client about medication, or if trained, administering medication
- Caring for household pets
- Support physical & mental wellbeing
- Liaise with other health care professionals
- Help with appointments and outings

This could extend to more specialist duties:

- Monitoring any changes in; diet, weight, or cognitive ability
- Continence care including catheter care
- Gastrostomy care including PEG feeding, stoma and urostomy care
- A carer should only be expected to do jobs that they are trained to do or that have been agreed with the client

Length of assignments

A live-in care assignment can last anywhere between a few days to several months, sometimes even longer depending on the relationship the carer has with the client. Most assignments however will see carers working on a rotational basis of a few weeks at a time. A carer will never be sent into an assignment without knowing how long it will last and how many days a week they are expected to work.

Self-employed carers will work with the client or their representative directly to determine hours and rates of pay. If the client requires more support than was initially agreed, then a higher rate (which should be agreed in advance), will be incurred by the client or other arrangements will have to be made by the client or their representative. Self-employed carers who work with an introductory agency, will have their clients and assignments coordinated for them via the agency and advised in advance of the client's needs.

For live-in careers who are employed directly by a care provider, hours will be set out in a contract. They will be required by law to take breaks and to work to allocated hours. Due to the long days a live-in carer can work, a care provider or client will expect them to take a couple of hours rest each day.

If the client requires more help than they have agreed with the carer or the care provider, the Care Manager in charge will manage this accordingly and may assign additional carers to help or manage the client's expectations accordingly.

Supporting a client all day

The work of a live-in carer is entirely flexible around the needs of the client and they will generally be expected to work when the client is awake during the day and requiring support. At night they will have their own room in the client's house to sleep.

There may be some occasions where they are also required to support during the night, but these shouldn't be often or for

long periods of time. If a live-in carer is consistently woken up at night to support the client, then a night carer may also be required.

Depending on the needs of the client, a live-in care shift can be between eight to twelve hours but is generally dependent on the needs of the client and some days may be longer than others.

Most care providers and care agencies will recommend carers take 14 hours of breaks throughout the seven-day week where they leave the client's home and enjoy downtime.

Staying in the home

A live-in carer spends most of the time with the client in their own home, but this depends on the needs of the client. If the client is able enough, a live-in carer can support a client to visit friends, go to appointments, go shopping, visit a place of worship, or even go on holiday. However, for clients who are housebound or suffering with particularly debilitating conditions, a live-in carer would not be

expected to leave the home unless they are on their break.

Administering medication

Homecare workers should, in most instances, only give limited help with the management of medicines. Carers are often not trained in nursing care; however, some carers are qualified to deliver nurse-led care and can administer medication if specified on the care plan, they have been trained in how to administer it, and are employed through a CQC regulated company.

Usually, a live-in carer will just need to remind the client to take their medication and help them with repeat prescriptions.



Driving

Not all clients require a carer that can drive; however, it is a common request of care providers and agencies that they provide carers who can drive. This is because often clients will no longer be able to drive for themselves but will still be mobile enough to travel to appointments or will need the carer to run errands for them.

A carer can use their own car, the client's car, or a leased car. If a carer is using their own car, they must have the appropriate business insurance in place. Alternatively, a carer can be included on a client's insurance policy and drive their car.

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Mealtimes

Most of the time the carer will buy and prepare a client's meals for them. The cost of the food will usually be covered by the client. It is common that the carer and client will then eat together, but this will depend on the wishes of the client. If the client and the carer do not share the same diet, then arrangements should be made.

Accidents and incidents

The procedures following an incident or death, whether expected or unexpected, will always be written into the client's care plan. If the carer has adhered to the care plan, then they will never be liable for any accidents, acts of self-harm, or death. If a client or their representative suspects acts of negligence or abuse then this will be raised with the agency, care provider, or appropriate service.

**Role of a
visiting carer**

Visiting carers



A visiting carer (also known as a daily carer or domiciliary care worker) is a carer that comes to a client's own home for a set number of hours and often has specific tasks to complete whilst they are there. Just as with live-in care, the role of a visiting carer is to help the client with daily tasks and to support them emotionally. A visiting carer will work around the individual's needs and schedules and can be a part-time or a full-time role visiting multiple clients each day.

What will a visiting carer do during an assignment?

Visiting carers are primarily on hand to support elderly and disabled adults with the tasks that they cannot physically do, things they may forgot to do, or jobs that they feel worried doing on their own. Clients requiring visiting care are normally more able, with lower care needs, than a live-in care client. Although when a visiting carer is needed to cover the breaks of a live-in carer, they should be equally well prepared to support clients who have more complex need too.

Often daily tasks will include:

- Helping with morning and evening routine
- Personal care
- Prompting and witnessing the taking of medication
- Preparing meals
- Household tasks
- Companionship

This may extend to:

- Help with eating
- Helping the client with move around
- Shopping and other errands
- Reminding the client about medication, or if trained, administering medication
- Continence care including catheter and bowel care
- Gastrostomy care including PEG feeding, stoma and urostomy care

A carer should only be expected to do jobs that they are trained to do or that have been agreed with the client or representative as part of their care plan.

Shift patterns

A visiting carer can spend anything from 30 minutes a week to a couple hours each day with a client; it varies greatly depending on the level of support needed. If the carer is employed by a care provider, they will have their contracted hours filled with multiple visits to a variety of local clients. If the carer is self-employed and working with multiple agencies, they will need to manage their various visits across the different agencies. If a self-employed carer works with a single agency however, the agency will schedule their clients in for them and assist them in working out travel times.

Travel times to and from assignments should always be taken into consideration. If a carer is late, this could mean that medication is not taken on time, or clients are stuck in bed for larger parts of the day. For this reason, visiting carers must be organised and punctual individuals. Sometimes however, the inevitable happens and trains are cancelled, or there's unexpected traffic and being late is unavoidable. If this happens, it is the

responsibility of the carer to let their care provider or agency know as soon as possible so they can inform the client or representative and make alternative arrangements if necessary. Self-employed carers would need to inform the client or representative directly.

When a carer signs up to an agency or applies for employment with a care company, they should be honest about the days and hours they want to work, to avoid disappointment on either side.



Breaks

Self-employed carer's will determine their own break schedule depending on the assignments and clients they do and don't take on. Carers employed by a regulated care provider will receive the legal breaks as set out in their contracts.

Amount of work

If a carer is employed by a care company, it will be outlined how many shifts they can expect either during the hiring process or in their contract, and it is rare that these hours are not met. Self-employed visiting carers will need to inform care agencies of their availability to ensure they are asked to attend enough clients.

It can be tempting for new carers to want to work 40 hours a week (full-time) to maximise their earnings, however, care work can be physically and emotionally tiring at first. Once clients and their routines are more familiar to a carer, things become easier and more work can be taken on.

Maximum hours

Most companies will have a cap on the maximum number of hours a carer can work in a week. Others will have rules around enforcing a break after several uninterrupted hours worked in a row. Self-employed carers are generally able to work as often or as little as they like.

Uniform

Most employed visiting carers will be required to wear a uniform, usually a company issued tunic bearing the company's logo. Self-employed carers are free to wear appropriate clothing to their client assignments.



**Earnings and career
potential**

Earnings potential



A carer's pay will vary depending on the type of assignments and clients they support and how often they work. Typically, someone starting out as an employed homecare worker can expect to earn around £11 an hour. The most experienced carers with additional qualifications allowing them to look after clients with more complicated needs can earn more than this, up to £30,000 when working full-time, sometimes more.

Self-employed carers have more freedom over the hours they work and the clients they choose to work with, which means that their earning potential is generally higher and can be more than £35,000, however with this comes increased administrative responsibility, less security in terms of guaranteed hours and a lack of supporting benefits such as sick or holiday pay entitlements.

Care work is often paid per hour, not salaried. This offers scope to earn more than an employer contract may stipulate

when overtime is taken into consideration. Overtime is not often paid at a higher rate in the care sector, but this will vary from employer to employer or what has been agreed directly with the client.

Working unsociable hours such as weekends and bank holidays will usually command a higher rate of pay, but this will again vary from employer to employer and client to client and it's important to agree in advance any specific arrangements for such work. Another important consideration when understanding a carer's earning potential is that live-in carers would not be expected to pay for food or contribute to household bills when in an assignment, which makes their earnings go further.

The best way to progress within the care sector is to attain qualifications and experience, affording greater potential to work with higher needs clients.

Carer pay can vary greatly depending on the company, the location, and the level of care being provided.



Employment status

Carer pay can vary greatly depending on the company, the location, and the level of care being provided. A self-employed carer may expect to be paid more per hour, but there will likely be a higher inconsistency of work as well as extra duties that must be taken into consideration such as filing tax returns and sourcing a consistent client base.

Payments

Employed carers will be paid by the care provider they work for into a bank account and their tax paid via PAYE. They may be paid monthly or weekly depending on their contract, role, or employer.

For self-employed carers, this will be decided between the carer and their clients, but it is most likely going to be via BACS (bank transfer) settled on a weekly basis, in arrears, so accurate hours can be invoiced. Any self-employed carer would also have to file for self-assessment and submit their own tax returns.

Career progression

There is a lot of opportunity for career progression in homecare and it is a sector always on the lookout for new talent.

As with any profession, having relevant qualifications is essential to progress quickly in care. Depending on a company's structure, employed carers can also go on to carry out other roles within an organisation with some onward management roles including Care Managers, Care Coordinators, Trainer or Assessor, Team Leader and many more.



**Skills and
Training**

Skills and training



In this this section we talk about the necessary skills and knowledge needed to become an effective, professional, and safe home carer, and how to acquire these. These can be learned with experience over time or via training courses, unlike personal qualities which are intrinsic to an individual.

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Skills and experience

Many of these can be acquired on the job or through introductory training sessions.

- Good listening and communication
- Organisational skills
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- An understanding of dementia
- Ability to work independently
- Ability to understand and follow procedures
- Ability to safely handle vulnerable adults
- First aid

Qualifications needed

Professional qualifications are not always needed to become an entry level homecare worker. However, some employers will require basic education certificates and nearly all will ask for references from previous employers. All home carers need a valid enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before they can start work, you can read more about DBS checks in the 'How to become a carer' section. Most care providers will initially employ

a carer based on their personal qualities and then provide all the necessary follow up training. Some care providers and care agencies may require applicants to have specific qualifications before they will take them on board, these may include Moving and Handling, First Aid and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults certificates.

Transferable skills

A lack of experience in the care sector does not necessarily mean that someone cannot start a career in care. Experience from other job roles and industries can provide the necessary transferable skills needed in a care setting. For example, working in retail and hospitality will often equip someone with the people skills needed to treat clients with respect and prioritise their happiness and wellbeing.

Desirable skills

Cooking

Many clients will require their carer to prepare meals for them. Having a variety of nutritional recipes that a carer is comfortable and confident cooking will help them prepare meals that a client will enjoy. Clients can have allergies, intolerances, and dislikes towards certain food, so a good carer must be adaptable.

Driving

Clients may often want to hire a carer that can drive. Having a driving licence that is valid in the UK will help with employability and having ownership of a car is viewed as being even more beneficial.

Languages

Most the UK population can speak English fluently, however, it may not be their first language. Having fluency in other spoken languages, or British Sign Language, can help a carer further support clients who may be more comfortable communicating in their native tongue.

Pet care

One of the reasons people choose homecare over residential care is that it enables them to keep their pets at home with them. Over two million people in Britain know someone that has had to have their pet put to sleep because they were moving into residential care*. Having a little knowledge of how to look after a pet can go a long way in helping a client live happily in their own home with their furry friends.

*Better at Home 2019 (liveincarehub.co.uk)

Getting qualified

Having relevant professional qualifications is essential to progress within the care sector, as it allows for promotions and higher rates of pay.

Suggested courses

- The Care Certificate Level 1 is expected of all those working in Adult Health and Social Care. Many care providers will offer this as part of their introductory training.
- A Care Certificate Accredited Level 2 and 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care builds on the basic knowledge acquired as part of Level 1. Many care companies will encourage their staff to work towards this. Some care companies will require a carer to already have it before they start work with them.
- T-Level in Health serves as an alternative to A levels, apprenticeships and other 16 to 19 courses.

These courses, and many others, are available at learning provider locations such as colleges, as well as via online study and training programmes.

Training provided by an employer will usually be a mix of classroom and on-the-job training and shadowing of a more experienced carer.

If an employer does not or cannot support a carer through their professional training, the carer can apply for a Government-backed Advanced Learner Loan or apply to another care company that is committed to supporting their staff's development. Some college-based training courses will require basic certificates of education, such as GCSEs, before the carer will be accepted onto the course.

There are plenty of other vocational qualifications pitched at different levels within Health and Social Care that cover the practical skills and knowledge carers need.





**Qualities of a
good carer**

Qualities of a good carer



It takes a certain type of person to be a carer. Regardless of the skills and knowledge that can be acquired through training courses, caring requires certain qualities which come more naturally to some more than others.

Who makes a great carer?

Most people who apply to become professional home carers have at some previous experiences in care, whether that be voluntarily looking after a loved one, or limited experience in a regulated care

setting such as a care home..Others simply have an innate desire to help people. Experienced care agencies and companies understand that needs vary greatly from client to client and will match the personality and preferences of the client with a likeminded carer.

Any able adult can be a great carer. Someone straight out of school or someone who is looking for a rewarding vocation in retirement can help support vulnerable adults live well at home.



Caring

It may be obvious, but a great carer must have and be able to show compassion. Care can often be as difficult as it is rewarding. A good carer must genuinely be able to care about a client and their wellbeing.

Respectful

A good carer will be able to connect with their clients in a way that helps the client maintain a sense of independence. They always remember that their client is a person who has seen and experienced a lot in their lifetime and always treat them with respect and dignity.

Reliable

Many carers will be responsible for ensuring that their client eats and drinks enough throughout the day. They may also be responsible for prompting them with medication and attending appointments on time. The effects of not doing these things can be dramatic and negatively affect the individual's wellbeing. A good carer will need to have impeccable time keeping and most importantly, remember their duty of

responsibility for their client should they suddenly need their assistance.

Empathetic

Becoming older or living with an illness or disability can be a difficult process for most people. Everyday tasks become a challenge and so a good carer will understand the frustrations a client can feel and will emotionally support them through this.

Cheerful

The best carers are those who can light up a room when they walk into it. Many older people and disabled adults may suffer with depression or lower moods, and a carer who mirrors this can sometimes make things worse.

Observant

The physical and mental health of an elderly person or someone living with an illness can change dramatically and without warning. Observant carers will pick up on these signs of change early. Decreased appetite, weight loss or gain, increasing confusion,

increased irritability and even unexplained outbursts can indicate the start of a possible condition. A good carer will observe changes and be able to handle the situation confidently.

Practical

Carers will often find themselves helping with a variety of activities, such as bathing a client, helping them using the toilet or getting them dressed. A good carer identifies that these practical tasks are necessary to support the client live a happy and independent life and isn't squeamish at the sight of bodily fluids or functions.

Other soft skills include:

- Sensitivity and understanding
- A desire to help people
- The ability to work well with others
- Patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- The ability to accept criticism
- Attention to detail
- Excellent verbal communication
- The ability to carry out basic tasks on a computer or handheld device





**How to become
a carer**

How to become a carer



Care workers are in always in high demand given the UK's aging population continues to grow.

Where to apply

Someone thinking of a career in care should first decide if they are going to operate as a self-employed or an employed carer. For those new to care, it is recommended to work for a CQC-regulated care provider who can provide the training and support needed to progress and learn.

For those planning on being a self-employed carer, unless they already have long-term clients lined up, they should sign up to one or more introductory care agencies to help them source a consistent selection of clients.

There are many places to look for care jobs:

- Online jobs sites or search engines such as Google
- Adverts in the local paper
- Adverts on local notice boards
- Social media
- Care company websites
- Care company directories

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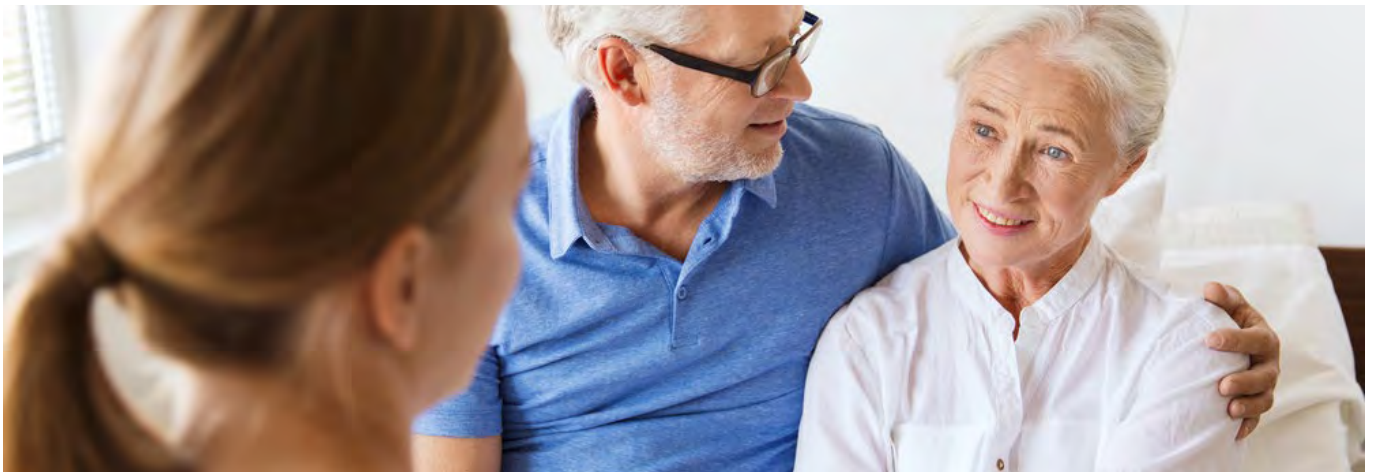
Choosing the right company

Employers can range from charities, small local companies, to franchises as part of a larger care group. The main difference between these companies will be:

- The services they provide, for example live-in care vs visiting care
- The locations they cover
- Their clientele, for example disabled adults, those at end-of-life, or those requiring complex nursing led care
- Their CQC rating (if they are registered) as this generally signifies the quality of service expected by the client and treatment of staff

- Their staff benefits such as bonus schemes, training, pay rates and company culture

Any prospective carer should ensure that they apply for the agency or care provider that is right for them. A company's website should have all the information needed to make an informed decision. Staff review sites, such as [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com), also offer valuable insights into what it is like to work for a certain company.



The application process

Different employers will have different application and recruitment processes, but expect to need the following to progress an application:

- Proof of a Right to Work in the UK
- A CV
- References from previous employers
- Any relevant training certificates or qualifications

Most applications will need to be completed online, but some companies may allow applications in other ways such as by post, over the phone, or in person. Successful applicants can expect to be invited to an interview. This may be a face-to-face interview, or it may be via an online video call

The interview

There are many different things that can happen during an interview for a care worker position depending on the stage of the application, the role, and the company. Applicants will usually be expected to bring the relevant paperwork at this stage of the

process which may include documents, certificates, and background checks. The interview will likely take the form of a conversation between the applicant and the recruiter who will ask questions aimed at determining relevant prior experience, behavioural traits, competency, and desired working patterns.

Starting a care job

It usually takes between two to six weeks from initial application to a carer being appointed. The main thing that might delay starting work as a carer is the acquisition of a valid DBS. DBS checks are made on applicants to prove they are certified as safe to work with vulnerable adults. A start date can also depend on a company's specific induction process, along with any additional training they may require. This will all be discussed during the interview or application process. This will vary from company to company and dependent on the individual's experience, qualifications and the role they have applied for.

Do I need a DBS?

Every professional care worker in the UK needs a valid DBS to start working. There are three levels of DBS and for most homecare jobs, an enhanced DBS will be required. This can only be requested by eligible organisations or companies.

What is a DBS?

The Disclosure and Barring Service helps employers make safer recruitment decisions by processing and issuing DBS checks for England, Wales, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. It is a legal requirement for those working in adult health and social care. If a carer already has an enhanced DBS, they can use the DBS Update Service.

This is an online subscription service that allows them to keep their standard and enhanced DBS certificates up to date. It also allows employers to check a certificate online, with consent. The update service costs £13 per year and starts from the date the DBS certificate was issued. Not all employers will accept this however and may still request a new DBS is raised.

There are three levels of DBS check:

Basic

- The basic level is a check on criminal history. Individuals can apply for this level of DBS.

Standard

- A standard DBS check is an in-depth criminal record check which shows information of all cautions, warnings and reprimands recorded.

Advanced

- An enhanced check includes all the information contained in a standard DBS check plus additional information such as a listing on the Children's Barred List or Adult First list. Most roles in education and health care require the Enhanced DBS Check due to the nature of the work and the groups of people a carer will be supporting.

Overseas checks

If the applicant has lived outside the UK for a period of more than six months within the last five years, or they are applying from overseas, they may be required to provide a police check from that country to account for their time spent outside of the UK.

Working with multiple agencies

Most employed carers will be contractually obliged to only work for one care provider; however, they can sometimes be employed with other companies outside of the sector. Self-employed carers, on the other hand, often sign up to multiple care agencies to maximise their chance of being offered assignments. This can however lead to scheduling conflicts between the different agencies.

Covid-19 vaccination

It is always best to check the official government guidelines regularly via the gov.uk website to determine whether carers carrying out face-to-face CQC-regulated care activities need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Most clients will however request a carer who is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and this is reflected in who care companies and agencies are looking to take on.

Looking for a job as a carer?

We're always more than happy to help. Call us on **0800 056 7183**



In 2020/21, Around 16% of adult social care workers (270,000) did not identify as British. Compared to the national average of 8%.

- [SKILLSFORCARE.ORG.UK](https://skillsforcare.org.uk)





**Applying
from overseas**

Becoming a carer from overseas



Around 16% of adult social care workers do not identify as British. Compared to the national average of 8% , this suggests that there is a high proportion of homecare workers that have been employed from overseas*. However, securing employment in the UK from overseas is not as simple as it is for a British citizen.

*The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce 2021 (skillsforcare.org.uk)

Right to work in the UK

All employers are required by law to check their employees have the right to work in the UK.

The following determine who has the right to work in the UK as a carer:

- A British citizen
- A certificate of registration or a naturalisation as a British Citizen together with an official document showing their national insurance number
- Right of Abode in the UK or a UK Ancestry visa due to grandparents,

parents or spouse being born in the UK

- EU Pre Settled or Settled status
- UK Government Share Code, proving the right to work in the UK
- Frontier Worker Permit
- If none of these apply, then to work in the UK, the employer will need to be licenced by the Home Office to sponsor a Skilled Worker Visa

Most companies will require a professional carer to have a UK bank account and a registered address or PO Box in the UK.

Private households cannot acquire a licence to sponsor Skilled Worker applications, although an individual registered as a sole trader can. However, this very rarely occurs.

Unless specifically agreed in advance with the care company or client, a carer from overseas will be expected to pay for their own flights or transportation to and from the UK.

Working self-employed

Any agency that a self-employed carer chooses to work with will ensure that the carer has the right to work in the UK and a valid DBS. It is the carer's responsibility to ensure they are appropriately insured and that they are paying tax on their earnings in accordance with UK law.

Clients or their representatives may choose to request a carer's documents directly before they agree to any assignments. This may include the carer's references, COVID vaccination status, evidence of their Driving Licence, insurance policies, and evidence of their self-employment status.

A carer from overseas should have a UK bank account as often they will be unable to complete their DBS application without one.

How do I find jobs in the UK?

Carers from overseas can find out about jobs in the UK in the same way that those in the UK can.

They won't be able to check the notice board in the local village hall, but they will have access to all the same websites.

Most reputable care providers and agencies list job vacancies on online jobs boards such as:

- CV library
- Total jobs
- Indeed

Each of the care companies on these sites will normally also have their own website which will provide more information on what it is like to work there.

Foreign driver's licences

This varies from country to country. Make sure to check the UK's DVLA and DVSA websites. For example, a South African full driver's licence can be used to drive small vehicles for 12 months from their last entry to the UK.

Registering a UK address

A carer cannot register themselves at a client's address. A carer without an address in the UK should set up an easily accessible PO Box for post to be delivered to.

Overseas training certificates

Any foreign qualifications are not equivalent to UK based qualifications and the UK equivalents will need to be taken.

Paying tax in the UK

Overseas carers working in the UK must pay tax and National Insurance in the UK. Employers will deduct these automatically from pay each month. However, self-employed carers should register with HMRC and complete a yearly tax return through the UK's Government Gateway.



Useful resources

Useful resources



There are plenty of online resources which can be used to help a potential carer find the information they need, alongside websites for those who are currently working as home carers.

www.cqc.org.uk

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. On this site you can read news in the sector as well as up to date guidance.

www.nhs.uk

The National Health Service (NHS) website is a fantastic resource to learn the basics about several diseases, illnesses, and health problems that a client may be living with.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk

Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England. They provide countless resources for those interested in starting a career in care and those already working in the sector.

Information and support

www.alzheimers.org.uk

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

www.parkinsons.org.uk

Job sites

uk.indeed.com

www.cv-library.co.uk

www.reed.co.uk

www.totaljobs.com

Official guidance

www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-checking-service-guidance--2

- UK Gov DBS Guidance

www.adultsocialcare.co.uk

- Government Department of Health and Social Care

With experience, carers can become lead care workers and, if they study for further qualifications like a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Adult Care or a degree in social work, they can move into more senior jobs managing people or services.

- [NATIONALCAREERS.SERVICE.GOV.UK](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)





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