

Overseas Care Worker Onboarding - Which Cohort, and What the Care Certificate Requires

Decide quickly which route a new starter came through, what it means for their Care Certificate, and what to record.

England. Care Certificate: 16 standards (Skills for Care, March 2025). **Last verified:** 28 August 2026.

Important immigration rule

Since 22 July 2025, employers can no longer sponsor new care workers or senior care workers to come from overseas under the route. In 2026, a care worker being sponsored in these roles must already be in the UK and meet the relevant in-country requirements. This tool helps you identify the likely onboarding route and the Care Certificate action needed.

Cohort decision table

Cohort	How you'll recognise them	Care Certificate position	What you do
In-country switcher (moved off a student, graduate or dependant visa into care)	Where the 3-month transitional rule applies, they must have been legally working for you as a care worker or senior care worker for at least 3 months before you assign the Certificate of Sponsorship.	May not already hold a Care Certificate.	Complete the full Care Certificate , normally within the employer's induction period. Assess knowledge and workplace competence before unsupervised practice.
Sponsor transfer (already sponsored and changing employer)	Already holds or has continuously held Skilled Worker permission in an eligible care worker occupation. Different transitional conditions can apply from a new in-country switch.	Likely to already hold evidence of prior induction and competence.	Verify existing evidence. Check retained competence and complete only local induction or genuine gaps. Do not automatically make them repeat the whole certificate.
Displaced worker (lost sponsorship after a sponsor licence was revoked or ceased)	Already in the UK and seeking a new sponsor. They may have existing training or certificate evidence, but records from a previous employer can be incomplete.	May already hold the Care Certificate, although evidence can be harder to obtain.	Verify what you can. Reassess only missing or uncertain areas, document the decision, and provide appropriate supervision until competence is demonstrated.

Protect displaced and internationally recruited workers. Workers should not be charged work-finding fees, and sponsors must not pass prohibited sponsorship costs to sponsored workers. Concerns about exploitation can be reported to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

Three points to keep separate

1	The Care Certificate is not a right-to-work document. It evidences workplace knowledge and competence. Keep it separate from immigration status, sponsorship, right-to-work checks, DBS checks and references.
2	Professional registration and overseas qualifications are not the same thing. Do not assume an overseas professional qualification removes the need for care-worker induction or competence assessment. Check the person's UK registration status and role.
3	Do not automatically repeat verified learning. The Care Certificate is designed to be portable between employers. A new employer should still check that competence has been retained and complete local induction or any identified top-up.

Decision record - overseas onboarding

Staff member	_____
Cohort	☐ In-country switcher ☐ Sponsor transfer ☐ Displaced worker
Care Certificate	☐ Full, new ☐ Already holds it - verified ☐ Top-up only
Evidence relied on	_____ _____
Gaps reassessed	_____ _____
Decided by / date	_____
Signed off to work unsupervised	☐ Yes ☐ No
Review date	_____

CQC reminder: providers should have an induction programme that prepares staff for their role. Where appropriate, staff should be supervised until they demonstrate an acceptable level of competence to work unsupervised.

Official sources to check

Use primary sources for immigration, induction and competence decisions. Immigration rules change frequently, so verify the current position for individual cases.

GOV.UK - Health and Care Worker visa / international recruitment	https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-health-and-social-care-jobs-in-the-uk-from-a-broad
GOV.UK - Sponsor a Skilled Worker guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-skilled-worker
Skills for Care - Care Certificate standards	https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Certificate/Care-Certificate-standards.aspx
CQC - Regulation 18: Staffing	https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/regulations-service-providers-and-managers/health-social-care-act/regulation-18
GLAA - worker exploitation / reporting concerns	https://www.gla.gov.uk/
Immigration Advice Authority (IAA)	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-advice-authority

Disclaimer

This tool is general guidance for care providers in England. It is not legal or immigration advice.

Caredemy is a training provider and is not regulated to give immigration advice. Immigration rules change frequently. For an individual immigration case, use a suitably regulated immigration adviser, such as an adviser registered with the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA), or an appropriately regulated legal professional.

Last verified: 28 August 2026 **Suggested next review:** November 2026

Onboarding overseas staff and want the training handled?

Explore Caredemy's online Care Certificate training and compliance tools at caredemy.co.uk.