

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

Manager tool

Care Certificate: 16 standards

Last verified: 18 August 2026

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

The rule that changed: From 22 July 2025, employers can no longer sponsor new care workers or senior care workers (SOC 6135/6136) to enter the UK from overseas. In-country sponsorship can still be possible under transitional rules. So for this tool, start by identifying the worker's current UK route and sponsorship history.

Which cohort are you onboarding?

COHORT	HOW YOU'LL RECOGNISE THEM	CARE CERTIFICATE POSITION	WHAT YOU DO
In-country switcher (for example, moving from another visa route into care)	Already in the UK. If relying on the in-country switching provision, they must have been legally working for the proposed sponsor in SOC 6135/6136 for at least 3 months before the CoS is assigned.	May have no Care Certificate, or may have relevant prior learning/overseas healthcare experience.	Check prior learning. If new to care, use the 16 standards for induction and assessment. Aim to complete the Care Certificate in the normal induction period (often around 12 weeks), based on competence.
Existing sponsored care worker changing employer (sponsor transfer)	Already holds Skilled Worker permission in SOC 6135/6136 (or predecessor codes) and has continuous relevant permission. The 3-month rule is not universal for this cohort.	Often already holds the Care Certificate and has UK care experience.	Verify available evidence, map it to the new role, complete local induction/refresher learning where needed, and assess competence. Do not automatically make them retake the whole Care Certificate.
Displaced worker (previous sponsor lost its licence)	Already in the UK and seeking new employment/sponsorship. If their visa is curtailed after sponsor-licence loss, GOV.UK says they will normally have 60 days, or the time remaining on the visa if shorter.	May already hold the Care Certificate and have substantial UK experience, but records can be difficult to obtain.	Verify what you can. Where evidence is missing, reassess the uncertain gaps rather than assuming competence or automatically restarting everything. Record the rationale.

Displaced workers: loss of sponsorship can follow a sponsor-licence revocation and does not by itself mean the worker did anything wrong. Treat the worker fairly and be alert to exploitation. Employers must not pass sponsor-licence, Certificate of Sponsorship or Immigration Skills Charge costs to sponsored workers.

Three things to keep separate

1. Care Certificate != right to work	The Care Certificate is about knowledge, skills and behaviours. It does not establish immigration status and does not replace right-to-work, sponsorship, DBS, references or safer-recruitment checks.
2. Overseas qualification != UK registration	A regulated professional role requires the relevant UK professional registration. If an overseas-qualified clinician is employed in a non-regulated care role, assess the requirements of that role and recognise credible prior learning rather than assuming either automatic exemption or automatic full repetition.
3. Existing Care Certificate evidence should travel	Skills for Care says a worker who has their Care Certificate should not need to retake it when moving jobs. The new employer may ask them to show how previous learning aligns with local requirements and may require refresher learning.

Record your decision

Use this card as a concise record of the onboarding decision. Keep the underlying evidence in your normal secure HR/training system.

DECISION RECORD - OVERSEAS ONBOARDING	
Staff member:	
Cohort:	☐ In-country switcher ☐ Existing sponsored worker changing employer ☐ Displaced worker ☐ Other / needs advice
Care Certificate decision:	☐ Full/new induction route ☐ Existing evidence accepted ☐ Targeted top-up/refresher ☐ Reassessment needed
Evidence relied on:	
Gaps / actions:	
Workplace competence:	☐ Demonstrated ☐ Further support/assessment required
Decided by:	Date:
Signed off to work unsupervised:	☐ Yes ☐ No Review date:

Based on official guidance

GOV.UK - Sponsor a Skilled Worker guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-skilled-worker/workers-and-temporary-workers-sponsor-a-skilled-worker-accessible
GOV.UK - Health and Care Worker visa: your job	https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa/your-job
GOV.UK - If your sponsor loses its licence	https://www.gov.uk/employee-lose-sponsor-licence
Skills for Care - Care Certificate standards	https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Developing-your-workforce/Care-Certificate/Care-Certificate-standards.aspx
Skills for Care - Care Certificate FAQ	https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Frequently-asked-questions.aspx
CQC - Regulation 18: Staffing	https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/regulations-service-providers-and-managers/health-social-care-act/regulation-18
GOV.UK - International recruitment code of practice	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-international-recruitment-of-health-and-social-care-personnel
Immigration Advice Authority (IAA)	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-advice-authority

Important 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 advice on an individual immigration case, use an appropriately regulated immigration adviser, such as an adviser regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA), or another authorised legal professional. **Last verified: 18 August 2026. Next scheduled review: November 2026.**

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