

# The Code of Conduct in Action

A user guide for Healthcare Support Workers and  
Adult Social Care Workers in England

**This user guide relates to the Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England.** A separate guide 'Code of Conduct Employer Guide' is available for use by your employer.

The Code of Conduct may have been given to you by your employer. The Code of Conduct can be found here on the [Skills for Health website](#) and on the [Skills for Care website](#).

The Code of Conduct applies to you if you are a:

- **Healthcare Support Worker** (including an Assistant Practitioner) in England who have patient-facing roles (where they don't already have a Code that applies to them)
- **Adult social care worker** in England. This could be in an independent capacity (for example as Personal Assistant), for a residential care provider, or as a supported living, day support or domiciliary care worker. Social Work Assistants are not included.

**The purpose of this guide is to:**

- outline what the Code of Conduct is and why it has been developed
- outline how it relates to other initiatives
- outline the benefits of adopting the Code of Conduct for you, your employer and people who use services
- explain what actions you need to take to adopt the code.

**What is the Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers?**

The Code of Conduct provides a clear set of standards. It is essential to protect people who use health and care services from harm. The code ensures you can:

1. be sure of the standards you are expected to meet
2. check that you are fulfilling the requirements of your role, behaving correctly and doing the right thing at all times
3. identify areas for your continuing professional development.

## Why do we have a Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers?

Organisations including employers, unions and professional bodies have been writing and using different Codes of Conduct for many years. Some organisations require Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers to adhere to a Code of Conduct, whilst for others this has never been a requirement. This has meant that standards for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers could vary greatly from organisation to organisation.

Providing a safe, efficient and effective health and social care system is complex. One way we can reduce risks is by ensuring that you and your fellow workers are clear about how you should behave at work and what you should and should not do.

The Department of Health asked to develop a Code of Conduct that could be used consistently by Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England. The Code of Conduct was written with lots of help and advice from Support Workers, registered health and social care professionals, people who use health /care services and their carers, employers and unions.

The Code of Conduct covers the key behaviours needed to deliver safe and high quality care. It empowers you to raise any concerns you have about the quality of care and support being provided. It is also a useful tool for you and your employer to use to identify if you need help and to support you to develop in your role.

### Does the code have to be used

There is no legal requirement for employers to use this Code of Conduct. However, the Code of Conduct outlines 'best practice' and may be a condition of employment. It may also be used to inform objective setting, personal development reviews, investigation and complaints procedures or quality inspections.

### How does the Code of Conduct 'fit' with the Care Certificate?

The Code of Conduct describes how you should **behave**.  
The Care Certificate describes the minimum things you must **know and be able to do**.

Using the Code of Conduct with the Care Certificate is a measurable way for you and your employer to check that you are working to the same standard as other people in similar roles across health and social care. They are designed to help you, to provide safe, effective and compassionate healthcare, care and support

### If you work in health (NHS):

The Code of Conduct relates to section 4b of the NHS Constitution, 'Staff, your responsibilities.' It gives you more detailed standards, which work to the overall statements contained within the NHS Constitution.

### If you work in social care:

The seven statements and supporting tasks that make up the Social Care Commitment, are based directly on the standards contained within the Code of Conduct.

## **ACTIONS YOU NEED TO TAKE**

If you have been given the Code of Conduct by your employer you will be expected to work to the standards described in the Code.

You must therefore:

1. check that you have a copy of the Code of Conduct document as well as this guide
2. you should have a named workplace supervisor to monitor your progress towards achieving and maintaining all the standards in the Code of Conduct. Check that you know who that person is
3. read both this document and the Code of Conduct
4. check that you understand it fully. Ask your named workplace supervisor for help if there is something you do not understand
5. apply the Code of Conduct every day, to all aspects of your working life
6. record evidence to show that you are working to the Code of Conduct in accordance with your local procedure or agreed ways of working. You may wish to refer back to this evidence when you are taking part in your appraisal process
7. discuss with your named workplace supervisor anything in the Code of Conduct that you find difficult to achieve and act on the advice they give you
8. your employer may ask you to formally sign up to the Code of Conduct and you should follow your workplace procedures on how to do this.