

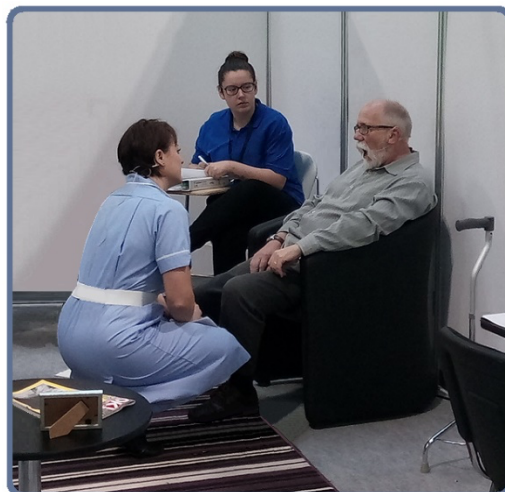
2025 Technical Handbook




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National Competition

Health and Social Care



Contents

1. Health and social care Competition Sponsors	Page 3
2. Introduction	Page 4
3. WorldSkills UK	Page 4
4. Competition Organising Partner (COP) - ACTAN.....	Page 4
5. Health and social care sector overview	Page 5
6. Health and social care career pathways.....	Page 6
7. Health and social care competition overview:	
A. Competition entry criteria.....	Page 7
B. Competition structure	Page 8
C. Competition rules.....	Page 10
D. Competition exercises and marking guide	Page 11
E. Competition Cycle	Page 11
F. Registration	Page 11
G. Pre-competition activity	Page 11
H. Judges' top tips.....	Page 12
8. Guidance for Sponsors.....	Page 12

1. Competition Sponsors

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation for the support and financial assistance provided by this year's competition sponsors.

- MAIN SPONSOR: **Qualifi - An Ofqual recognised Awarding Organisation**
- The Care Apprenticeship Board (CAB)
- The Black Country Partnership for Care (BCPC)
- JS Consultants UK Limited
- South Devon College
- Training For People That Care



2. Introduction

This handbook serves as the official guide for the 2025 WorldSkills UK National Health and Social Care Competition.

The competition aims to showcase and develop excellence in healthcare and social care skills across the UK. This handbook provides competitors, trainers, judges, and competitor sponsors with the necessary technical information, rules, and guidance to ensure a fair and high-quality competition.

All competitors and competitor sponsors are encouraged to review and adhere to the outlined guidelines for a successful competition experience.

3. WorldSkills UK

WorldSkills UK is an independent charity and a partnership between employers, education providers, and governments across the UK. Together, they work to raise standards in apprenticeships and technical education, enabling more young people to get the best start in work and life.

WorldSkills UK aims to ensure that all young people have equal access to high-quality apprenticeships and technical education by:

- **Inspiring young people** through careers advice resources, helping them choose apprenticeships and technical education as a prestigious and valuable career route, regardless of their background.
- **Developing excellence** by testing and assessing young people's skills and knowledge through national and international competitions, boosting their confidence and career prospects.
- **Innovating to drive excellence** by mainstreaming global best practices, improving teaching, training, and assessment standards through international benchmarking, ensuring that young people, employers, and the UK economy benefit from world-class skills.

WorldSkills UK is part of **WorldSkills International**, a global movement supported by over 80 member countries. This initiative celebrates young people achieving world-class standards through international skills competitions, often referred to as the 'skills Olympics.'

For more information about **WorldSkills UK** and its initiatives, visit the official [WorldSkills UK website](#).

4. Competition Organising Partner (COP) - ACTAN

Responsibility for the overall delivery and management of the health and social care competition rests with ACTAN, who have been approved in this role by WorldSkills UK.

ACTAN is an independent charity that is focused on learning, educational and continuous professional development opportunities for the health and social care sector. We work with Sector Skills Councils, Awarding Organisations, service providers and a wide range of key sector stakeholders as a voice for:

- individuals receiving health and social care support
- social care employers delivering care services
- organisations delivering Health and social care training and education

As the COP to WorldSkills UK, ACTAN is responsible for:

- planning and co-ordinating skills competitions
- agreeing commitments and resources
- mapping competition briefs against a range of the Level 3 Health & Social Care Diploma and Apprenticeship standards as well as the WorldSkills Standards Specification
- designing or identifying competition materials and resources
- facilitating opportunities for meaningful employer and key stakeholder engagement

ACTAN / COP Management representatives:

- Mrs Judith Salmon
- Mr Sau Man Li

Contact details: worldskills@actan.org.uk

5. Health and social care sector overview

The health and social care sector encompasses a wide range of services that provide healthcare and social support to people who use services. This includes hospitals, ambulance services, physiotherapy and other specialist services, as well as social care services, including domiciliary care, care homes (with and without nursing), and supported living services.

Key Sector Statistics

- **NHS employment:** As of 2024, the NHS employs approximately 1.4 million people in England, making it the UK's largest employer.
- **Adult Social Care employment:** In England, the adult social care sector comprises around 1.84 million posts as of 2023/24, reflecting a 2.6% increase from the previous year.
- **Combined workforce:** Together, the health and social care sectors employ approximately one in ten of the UK's working population.
- **Job roles diversity:** The sector offers over 350 distinct job roles, providing a wide range of career opportunities.
- **Vacancies:** The adult social care sector in England had a vacancy rate of 8.3% in 2024, equating to approximately 124,500 vacancies at any given time.
- **Economic contribution:** The adult social care sector in England contributes approximately £50.3 billion to the UK economy.
- **Employment proportion:** The social care workforce in England represents about 6% of total employment, with the average full-time equivalent worker generating £19,700 in economic value annually.
- **NHS patient interactions:** The NHS handles nearly 1.5 million patient interactions every 24 hours, highlighting the extensive demand for healthcare services.

Sector Developments and Career Opportunities

The health and social care sector is undergoing rapid change, driven by evolving government policies, technological advancements, and an increasing demand for multi-skilled professionals. New career pathways are continually emerging, offering opportunities for professionals to take on dynamic and fulfilling roles in different environments.

Flexibility is a key feature of the sector, allowing professionals to transition across different roles and specialisms. This diversity makes health and social care an excellent career choice for those unsure of a specific path, while also enabling those with clear ambitions to progress towards specialised roles.

Key Skills and Competencies

Health and social care professionals develop and apply a wide range of transferable skills that are highly valued by employers, including:

- **Critical thinking:** Analysing and evaluating information to make informed decisions.
- **Communication:** Effectively engaging with individuals, groups, and organisations.
- **Record-keeping and decision-making:** Producing accurate documentation and making well-judged choices.
- **Problem-solving:** Identifying issues and proposing logical solutions.
- **Teamwork and Leadership:** Working collaboratively and taking on responsibilities.
- **Time management and independent learning:** Managing workloads effectively and continuing professional development.
- **Use of ICT:** Utilising digital tools to support service delivery.
- **Data interpretation:** Analysing and using data effectively in health and social care settings.
- **Professionalism and Ethics:** Demonstrating respect, integrity, and adherence to best practices.

These skills are applicable both within and outside the sector, enhancing employability and career progression opportunities.

Values, behaviours and attitudes

Depending on the role, you don't always need qualifications or previous work experience in the sector to get a job as a health and social care professional. What's really important is having the right values, behaviours and attitudes to work effectively with people who need care and support.

The following are some examples of the values and behaviours you might need to work in health and social care around which the competition exercises have been built around:

- a. dignity and respect
- b. learning and reflection (thinking about what you do and why you do things in a certain way)
- c. working together
- d. commitment to quality care and support.

6. Health and social care career pathways

With over 350 job roles, the UK's health and social care sector offers extensive opportunities for individuals to embark on and advance in fulfilling careers. The following pathways illustrate the variety of opportunities available for new entrants:

Career Pathways in Health - The health sector provides numerous career frameworks, including:

- **Allied Health Professions (AHPs) and support roles:** AHPs are vital members of healthcare teams, working with patients in therapeutic, diagnostic, and rehabilitation services. Support roles assist AHPs in delivering high-quality care.
- **Healthcare science careers:** The Modernising Scientific Careers initiative has restructured healthcare science roles into clear pathways, including assistant roles, the Practitioner Training Programme (PTP), Scientist Training Programme (STP), and Higher Specialist Scientific Training (HSST).
- **Health Informatics:** This field focuses on managing data, information, and knowledge to support healthcare delivery. Roles include information management, IT, knowledge management, health records, and project management.

- **Public health careers:** Roles in public health focus on improving population health, preventing disease, and promoting well-being. Opportunities include Health Promotion Specialists, Environmental Health Officers, and Public Health Intelligence Analysts.
- **Administration, business support, and management of health services:** Administrative staff play a crucial role in supporting clinical teams by managing records, scheduling appointments, and coordinating daily operations.

For more information on health career frameworks, visit the [NHS Health Careers website](#).

Career Pathways in Adult Social Care - The adult social care sector offers various career frameworks, including:

- **Direct care roles:** These involve working directly with individuals who need care and support across diverse settings.
- **Management roles:** Managers oversee daily operations within various care services, including staff recruitment and management, budgeting, and ensuring service quality meets national standards.
- **Regulated professional roles:** These positions require registration with a regulatory body to practice.
- **Other social care support roles:** While not involving direct care, these roles are essential in supporting the health and well-being of individuals requiring care.
- **Ancillary roles:** These positions, though not involving direct care, are vital to the functioning of care organisations.
- **Care workforce pathway:** The Care Workforce Pathway provides structured progression routes, outlining skills, learning, and career development opportunities within adult social care.

For more information on adult social care career frameworks, visit the [Skills for Care website](#).

7. Health and social care competition overview:

This skills competition has been designed by industry experts to assess an individual's knowledge, practical skills and employability attributes against set criteria in a competitive timed environment.

a. Competition entry criteria

To be eligible to enter this competition in 2025, participants must be at least 16 years of age on 1st September 2025 and must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- employed in the UK, having completed a relevant Level 3 UK qualification in the last 12 months.
- studying towards or have completed a relevant Level 3 qualification in the UK, including T Levels.
- alternatively, participants may be working towards a Level 3 apprenticeship in a relevant trade in the UK.

Additionally, for foundation skills competitions (SEND/ASL/ALN), participants must be appropriately challenged at the level of the competition and registering organisations may be asked to provide evidence of participants' level and specific learning and support needs.

Participants who fall into the following categories are not eligible to enter this competition:

- gold medal winners cannot compete in the competition they won in any subsequent years
- those who have been employed within the health and social care sector for more than **three** years prior to registration, not including the period of apprenticeship.

Competitors may only enter one competition in any given competition year and participants must have the support of their college, university, training provider and/or employer to participate.

This [link](#) can be used to access a set of the WorldSkills UK terms and conditions of entry:

b. Competition structure

This competition showcases the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for providing quality care in health and social care.

The competition offers a real-world environment that challenges students and apprentices beyond their formal education.

The WorldSkills Occupational Standards (WSOS) for H&SC represent the benchmark for global excellence in vocational performance and this national competition. Each exercise throughout the competition has been designed to test the competitor's technical ability and competence in relation to:

1. **Work Organisation and Management:** Practitioners are expected to follow strict health, safety, hygiene, and environmental regulations, manage resources sustainably, and maintain high levels of professionalism and self-management.
2. **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** This includes building client trust, maintaining confidentiality, and using therapeutic communication techniques. Practitioners must demonstrate empathy, respect for cultural and individual diversity, and the ability to work collaboratively with clients.
3. **Problem-Solving, Innovation, and Creativity:** Practitioners are required to identify and resolve client issues, develop creative solutions to improve quality of life, and adapt care to the individual needs of clients based on their personal history and preferences.
4. **Assessing Needs and Planning Client Care:** This involves thorough assessments of client needs and capabilities, planning personalised care, and considering clients' holistic needs, including their physical, emotional, and social well-being.
5. **Managing and Delivering Client Care:** Practitioners must ensure safe, culturally sensitive care delivery, promote client independence, and monitor health parameters. They also manage medical tasks within the scope of practice, such as administering medications and first aid.
6. **Evaluation of Care:** Reviewing and adapting care plans, collecting feedback from clients and families, and continually improving care quality.

This competition consists of:

- an entry stage, to include a self-reflective exercise and situational judgement task
- national qualifiers, where selected competitors complete a series of exercises.
- a UK national final, taking place at a location to be confirmed later in the year.

Competitors will be expected to exercise judgement and take appropriate action to support individuals to maintain their independence, dignity and control through a variety of practical exercises. These exercises assess contestants' critical thinking, decision-making, and judgement skills.

In addition to these key skills sets, judges will assess competitors' innate values, worldview, and behavioural traits to determine their competence at Level 3 in UK health and social care.



Entry Stage:

- **Process:** Competitors receive three tasks electronically post-registration, which must be completed and submitted by the specified deadline. Late submissions are not accepted.
- **Submission Format:** Competitors can use the provided template or submit their responses as a PDF file. If opting for a PDF, responses must be clearly labelled, adhere to the exercise instructions, and meet the specified criteria.
- **Evaluation:** Submitted tasks are evaluated within two weeks of the submission deadline. The top-scoring competitors are selected to advance to the national qualifiers and are notified of the outcome via email.

National qualifiers:

- **More detailed information about the format and location of the Health and Social Care, and Foundation: Health and Social Care will be provided at a later date.**

WorldSkills UK National Final

- **Format:** Competitors undertake multiple practical exercises covering various scenarios, rotating through these exercises over the competition duration.
- **Task Details:** Task durations vary based on complexity. Competitors are required to apply recognised health and social care techniques and procedures to fulfil the given briefs. They must demonstrate knowledge of any equipment used and follow best practices for each task.
- **Assessment:** Tasks are designed to assess the knowledge and skills of a health and social care worker at or working towards a Level 3 vocational qualification. A panel of judges from industry, colleges, training providers, and past finalists evaluates the competitors. Judges' decisions are moderated and quality assured by WorldSkills UK.
- **Recognition:** Following the competition, Gold, Silver, and Bronze medallists are announced at the WorldSkills UK Live medal ceremony. All National Final participants receive a certificate of participation in recognition of their achievement.
- **Materials, Equipment and competitor briefs**
 - **Preparation:** Competitors are invited to a training workshop before the competition date to help them prepare for the final. During this workshop, they receive competitor briefs and guidance related to the exercises they will undertake.
 - **Familiarisation:** At the final, a competition briefing and familiarisation period are scheduled to allow competitors to become acquainted with the competition area, materials, and any equipment that will be used.

c. Competition rules

These competition specific rules should be read in conjunction with the WorldSkills UK competition rules, where applicable. The WorldSkills UK competition rules can be found on the WorldSkills UK website - in the event of a conflict, these competition-specific rules will override the WorldSkills UK competition rules.

- **Special Requirements:** Competitors requiring special adaptations or literacy and numeracy support must inform the competition management team prior to the competition day.
- **Punctuality:** Competitors are responsible for arriving on time during live competitions; late arrivals may be excluded.
- **Dress Code:** Competitors must dress appropriately to portray a professional image reflective of sector dress codes. During the final, clothing must also be suitable for the exercises undertaken and the working environment, including appropriate footwear.
- **Electronic Devices:** Before the competition starts, competitors will be asked to put away mobile phones and any other internet-accessible devices (e.g., smartwatches, tablets, laptops) and must not use them during live competition.
- **Breakout Area:** A designated breakout area will be available for competitors to use when not competing.
- **Communication Restrictions:** During live competition, competitors must not discuss tasks with fellow competitors or seek support from sponsors, the audience, judges, or others regarding competition briefs.
- **Catering:** Food and drinks will be available for competitors throughout the competition. Any specific dietary needs or food allergies must be communicated to the competition management team prior to the competition day.
- **Supervision:** All competitors must be chaperoned if they leave the breakout area during live competition. For non-competition-related specific requirements, competitors can discuss these with their chaperones or a member of the competition management team.
- **Emergency Procedures:** In the event of a fire, accident, medical emergency, or other significant event, all competitors must follow the instructions of the competition management team.
- **Venue Compliance:** During the competition, competitors are expected to fully comply with the host venue's rules and instructions.

In-competition Rules

- **Language:** When competing, competitors are expected to communicate with any third parties and complete a range of tasks, including record-keeping, in English.
- **Timing:** Competitors must start and finish work when instructed by the lead judge or competition management team.
- **Breaks:** Competitors wishing to take a break or leave the competition area while the competition is in progress must obtain permission from the lead judge.
- **Completion of Tasks:** Competitors may end any exercise before the allotted time has elapsed but must declare that they have finished to the lead judge and may not re-enter the competition area once they have left.
- **Health Concerns:** If a competitor feels unwell at any stage of the competition, they must inform the lead judge or a member of the competition management team immediately.
- **Health and Safety:** Adhering to health and safety practices is the responsibility of each competitor; failure to do so may result in disqualification from the competition.
- **Disputes:** In the event of a dispute or disagreement, the lead judge should bring this to the attention of the chief competition judge, who will decide on the matter. This decision will be final and binding.

This [link](#) can be used to access a set of the WorldSkills UK Competition rules for 2025 entry:

d. Competition exercises and marking guide

The competition's national qualifiers and national final exercises and marking guides are reviewed and up-dated annually to reflect current sector specific standards, behaviours, attitudes and requirements.

Skills areas and marks vary from year to year based on the tasks and complexity of each exercise and are distributed across the six competition competencies.

e. Competition Cycle

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Registration | 3 rd March - 28 th March 2025 |
| - Entry stage competition activity begins | from 3 rd March 2025 |
| - Entry stage closes | 16 th April 2025 at 5:00 PM |
| - Qualifier stage competition activity begins | May / June 2025 |
| - Qualifier stage closes | 28 th June 2025 |
| - Finalist training days | Between September - November 2025 |
| - National Finals | 25 th - 28 th November 2025 |

f. Registration

To register for the competition, please visit [this link](#).

g. Pre-competition activity

Before registering to enter students and apprentices to take part in a WorldSkills UK Competition, it can be helpful to enable them to practice, test and challenge their technical and mental skills by getting involved in pre-competition activity. [In this link](#), there is a pre-competition activity handbook available for those interested in the competition, as well as the marking guide which also gives an insight as to how tasks are scored.

As well, the following activities could be used to support prospective competitors to get a feel for what will be expected of them in a WorldSkills UK Competition, whilst still in an environment with which they are familiar:

- on and off the job training and work experience
- WSUK or other externally run competitions
- internal competitions e.g. internal to an employer, specially designed competitions - using WSUK competition briefs
- local competitions e.g. in colleges and training providers.

h. Judges' top tips for competitors

- read the competitor brief and use all of the planning time to best effect
 - identify which elements you are familiar with and comfortable completing
 - determine a logical order to work through the brief
 - prepare / check any equipment or resources before starting.
- when working through the brief remember the principles of empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionality, partnership and accountability.
- Learn to manage your time effectively when completing - each exercise has a specified duration, so practice working to time and under pressure to perfect your timing
- Getting into the zone with the right mental focus will enable you to overcome doubts, stay composed, and avoid distractions while competing.
- If any part of an exercise does not go as planned, avoid dwelling on it. Accept it, move forward, and concentrate on successfully completing the remaining tasks in your brief.

8. Guidance for competitor sponsors:

1. **Find your shining stars:** Use the practical guidance and tools, downloadable from the [WorldSkills UK website](#), to run competition activity as part of your teaching and learning programme.
2. **Express your interest:** Visit the WorldSkills UK website* and sign up to keep informed of current developments and ongoing tips on embedding skills competitions.
3. **Be prepared to register:** Formally enter the competitions from early 2025.
4. **Support your students:** Help students prepare for the competition by developing their technical and mental skills, ensuring they can perform at their best. A wide range of online tools and resources are available to support this process. Providing participants with the necessary guidance and resources will also be essential for their success.
5. **Ready, steady, compete:** If your learners have made it through the passive stage to the Qualifiers, they will be competing anytime between April and June 2025. All competitors receive certification for their achievements at the qualifiers.
6. **Finalists announced:** From July 2025 WorldSkills UK will verify the results of all the competitions and invite the highest performers from the National Qualifiers to WorldSkills UK LIVE to compete in the UK National Finals in November 2025.
7. **Celebrating success:** At the Finals awards ceremony WorldSkills UK will celebrate all finalists and those that are successful will receive an award. All finalists receive certification for their achievements.

