

Care workers and home carers

General competency framework · Frontline / operational level · 5 competencies · approx. 75 minutes

How to use this guide

- Focus on these 5 competencies — the behaviours that matter most for this role — not a chronological career history.
- Ask every candidate the same core questions, then probe. Allow around 15 minutes per competency.
- Ask for real examples and use STAR — the Situation, the Task, the Action they took, and the Result.
- Stay neutral, capture what they say, and judge later. Gather evidence on one competency at a time.
- Rate each competency 1–5 against the positive and negative indicators, and note the evidence.

5 Outstanding 4 Good 3 Acceptable 2 Marginal 1 Poor

1. Dependability

Conscientious and thorough in their approach to work, delivering what they promise to the necessary standard. Behaves in line with the organisation's values and ethical principles.

Why this matters for Care workers and home carers: Care work is built on trust — service users, families and employers rely on the worker to deliver consistent, conscientious practice in line with the Care Certificate's safe-practice standards. Dependability captures this foundation: doing what was promised, to the necessary standard, every time.

Tell me about a time you had a lot to get done on a shift. How did you make sure it was all done properly?

- How did you keep the standard up?
- What did you do if you were running short of time?

Describe a time you turned up and found things hadn't been done properly by someone before you. What did you do?

- How did you handle it?
- What was the result?

How do you make sure your work is always done to the right standard, even when no one's checking? Give an example.

- Have you ever been tempted to cut a corner? What did you do?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Cuts corners to get done quicker		Does the job properly, to the right standard
Unreliable; doesn't do what they said		Reliable — does what they say they will
Sloppy or careless in their work		Careful and thorough
Standard drops when no one is checking		Keeps standards up even when unsupervised
Bends the rules when it suits them		Sticks to the rules and does the right thing

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____

2. Customer Focus

Builds effective customer relationships to ensure needs and expectations are understood. Understands the importance of the customer to the business, seeking regular feedback whilst being prepared to say no when needed.

Why this matters for Care workers and home carers: The Care Certificate centres on person-centred values, dignity and adapting care to individual needs. Customer Focus captures understanding what each service user actually needs and seeking regular feedback — including being prepared to advocate when needed.

Tell me about a time you went out of your way to help a customer or member of the public.

- What did they need?
- What did you do?
- How did they react?

Describe a time a customer was unhappy or difficult. How did you handle it?

- What was the problem?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?

How do you know when you've done a good job for a customer? Give me an example.

- What do you look or listen for?
- Tell me about a time you got it right.

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Treats customers as a nuisance; unhelpful		Friendly, helpful and professional with customers
Doesn't take responsibility for a customer's problem		Takes ownership of sorting out customer issues
Doesn't really listen to what the customer needs		Listens and checks what the customer actually needs
Promises things that can't be delivered		Only promises what can be done; honest with customers
Doesn't see why the customer matters		Understands the customer keeps the business going

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____

3. Resilience

Remains calm and maintains a positive attitude when faced with difficult circumstances. Thrives under pressure, remaining focused despite distractions. Quickly recovers from setbacks.

Why this matters for Care workers and home carers: Caring is sustained physical and emotional work. Resilience captures the ability to remain calm and focused during difficult moments — distressed service users, demanding shifts, end-of-life situations — and to recover quickly so the next person gets the same quality of care.

Tell me about a really busy or stressful time at work. How did you cope?

- What made it hard?
- How did you keep going?

Describe a time something didn't go your way at work. How did you pick yourself back up?

- How did you feel?
- What did you do?

How do you keep calm when things get difficult or busy? Give me an example.

- What helps you stay level-headed?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Loses their cool when it gets busy		Stays calm and in control when busy or stressed
Lets setbacks knock them off course		Bounces back from setbacks
Gets negative when things go wrong		Keeps a positive attitude
Easily distracted under pressure		Stays focused under pressure
Struggles to keep going when it's hard		Keeps going when the going gets tough

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

4. Collaborative Working

Looks to understand others' perspectives and objectives. Respects different styles/approaches, whilst adapting their own style to enable them to work effectively with others.

Why this matters for Care workers and home carers: Care rarely happens alone — workers operate in shifts, handovers, family liaison, and multi-agency arrangements. Collaborative Working captures the ability to understand others' approaches and adapt one's own style to coordinate effectively with colleagues, families and external professionals.

Tell me about a time you worked as part of a team to get a job done.

- What was your part in it?
- How did you work with the others?
- What was the result?

Describe a time you had to change how you did something to fit in with the team or someone else's way of working.

- What did you change?
- Why?
- How did it work out?

Tell me about a time there was a disagreement or bad feeling in your team. What did you do?

- What was it about?
- How did you help sort it out?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Only wants things done their own way		Listens to others' views and finds common ground
Doesn't pull their weight in the team		Does their share and helps the team succeed
Clashes with teammates or is unhelpful in a group		Works well with others, even under pressure
Won't change how they work to fit the team		Adapts how they work to fit in with others
Makes disagreements worse		Helps sort out disagreements calmly

Summary of evidence: _____ Rating (1–5): _____

5. Personal Leadership

Takes responsibility for their own actions. Proactively takes on additional responsibilities and drives their own performance. Lives their own values, actively acknowledges and seeks feedback from others.

Why this matters for Care workers and home carers: Care work is values-driven and often unsupervised in the moment of delivery. Personal Leadership captures self-driven accountability, modelling values (the 6Cs of care, compassion, competence, communication, courage, commitment), and proactively seeking feedback to improve. The Care Certificate explicitly identifies these as foundational.

Tell me about a time you took responsibility for getting something done, even when it wasn't strictly your job.

- What made you step in?
- What did you do?
- How did it turn out?

Describe a time something went wrong with your work. What did you do about it?

- Did you own up to it?
- What did you do to put it right?
- What did you learn?

Tell me about a time someone gave you feedback on your work. How did you take it?

- What did they say?
- How did you feel?
- What did you change afterwards?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Blames others or makes excuses when something goes wrong		Owens up when something goes wrong and puts it right
Does only what they're told, nothing more		Steps up and takes on extra without being asked
Gets defensive when given feedback		Takes feedback well and acts on it
Cuts corners when no one is watching		Does the right thing even when no one is checking
Waits to be told what to do		Uses their initiative

Summary of evidence: _____ **Rating (1–5):** _____