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New qualifications

Qualifications	**NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills (610/7905/4)** **NCFE Level 1 Essential Digital Skills (610/7904/2)**
Go-live date	27 October 2026
Useful information	These qualifications are suitable for learners aged 14 and above. The purpose of these qualifications is to allow learners to demonstrate understanding of and competency in the essential digital skills they need for life and work. They will enable learners to engage with digital services and products in everyday life and work. These qualifications are externally assessed and externally marked. These qualifications are replacing NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills (603/7119/5) and NCFE Level 1 Essential Digital Skills (603/7118/3), which were withdrawn on 20 October 2026. Find out more about funding for these and other qualifications on our funding page. These qualifications are not eligible for direct claim status (DCS) as they are externally assessed. To apply for approval for these qualifications please visit the qualification page on the NCFE website. Centres who are already actively delivering the now-withdrawn qualifications will have approval applied automatically.
Learning resources	The existing learning resources for NCFE Entry Level 3 Essential Digital Skills (603/7119/5) and NCFE Level 1 Essential Digital Skills (603/7118/3) will be available for these qualifications.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	Both qualifications: 48
Total qualification time (TQT)	Both qualifications: 48
Credit	Both qualifications: N/A
Level	Entry Level 3 and Level 1

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Fee	Both qualifications: £23

Qualification	**NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (610/7733/1)**
Go-live date	03 November 2026
Useful information	This qualification is suitable for learners aged 19 and above. This qualification will enable learners to acquire knowledge and skills in the leadership and management of health and social care services within Northern Ireland. The learner must be employed in a health and social care role in an appropriate setting to be able to meet the assessment requirements of this qualification. The mandatory units include: • Unit 01 Understand leadership and management in health and social care (F/652/2257) • Unit 02 Leading and managing continuous professional development (CPD) in a health and social care service (H/652/2258) • Unit 03 Leading operational management in health and social care (J/652/2259) • Unit 04 Managing effective communication systems and practices in health and social care (M/652/2260) • Unit 05 Championing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in health and social care (R/652/2261) • Unit 06 Leading and managing a team in health and social care (T/652/2262) • Unit 07 Leading and managing health and safety and risk management in health and social care (Y/652/2263) • Unit 08 Leading and managing practice that promotes safeguarding in health and social care (A/652/2264) • Unit 09 Understand mental capacity, deprivation of liberty and restrictive practice safeguards in health and social care (D/652/2265) • Unit 10 Leading and managing assessment of individuals in health and social care (F/652/2266) • Unit 11 Leading and managing person-centred and outcomes-based practice with individuals and others in health and social care (H/652/2267) • Unit 12 Leading and managing quality processes in health and social care (J/652/2268) • Unit 13 Leading and managing supervision practice in health and social care (K/652/2269) • Unit 14 Leading and managing the appraisal of staff performance (R/652/2270).

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	The optional units allow learners to choose from a wide variety of areas to tailor the qualification to their needs and interests, and to reflect the context of their work. Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level, or with the same/a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility. This qualification replaces the NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (603/6041/0), Adult Management and Adult Residential Management pathways. The last date for new registrations on the legacy qualification is 04 May 2027, and existing learners will have until 04 May 2030 to complete and receive their certificate. The new qualification has a single structure with no pathways: all learners complete the same mandatory units, and choose optional units to reflect their role and service setting. This qualification has been approved as eligible for DCS so that centres can prove they meet the standards and requirements to deliver this qualification. Centres that currently hold DCS for the NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (603/6041/0) will carry this status across to the new qualification, rather than needing to re-establish it. This qualification is underpinned by the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for health and social care, is aligned with the Level 5 Health and Social Care Apprenticeship Framework, is endorsed by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), and sits within the Care in Practice (CiP) Framework. Centres approved for 603/6041/0 will be automatically approved for this qualification. New centres can apply for approval through the qualification page on the NCFE website.
Stakeholder involvement	The Department of Health (DoH) tasked NISCC to develop and deliver a career pathway framework for the registered social care workforce in Northern Ireland. NISCC worked in partnership with the social care sector and awarding organisations to develop this Level 5 Diploma. Support has been provided by: • NISCC, the statutory regulator for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland • Praxis Care, a Northern Ireland health and social care employer with over 1,500 care staff, supporting people with mental ill health, learning disabilities, autism and complex needs across community-based and residential settings • Rutledge Recruitment & Training, a Northern Ireland delivery partner with offices across Northern Ireland, providing healthcare recruitment, domiciliary care services, corporate training and government training initiatives.

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Guided learning hours (GLH)	659
Total qualification time (TQT)	900
Credit	90
Level	5
Fee	£192.50

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New unit programmes

Unit programme	**Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) (Year 7) (F/652/3751/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners in Year 7 and above. By the end of this unit, learners will understand the factors that can influence friendships and relationships throughout life, including how to manage conflict and how to maintain positive relationships. Learners will explore how personal choices can affect relationships, health and wellbeing, and will develop an understanding of healthy relationships and the factors that contribute to them. They will gain knowledge of physical, emotional and social changes that occur across different stages of life, as well as the processes of conception, birth and effective parenting. Learners will also understand how to promote and maintain good health, when and how to access healthcare services, and how to respond appropriately in situations where first aid may be required.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	36
Level	Level 1
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) (Year 8) (H/652/3752/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners in Year 8 and above. By the end of this unit, learners will understand how identity can be shaped by personal beliefs, influences and relationships. They will explore factors that may affect future choices, how to manage risks to health and wellbeing, and the skills needed to build and maintain healthy relationships. Learners will also develop an understanding of online safety, including the safe use of AI technology, and will explore human sexual response, healthy intimate relationships and harmful relationship behaviours.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	36

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Level	Level 1
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) (Year 9) (K/652/3754/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners in Year 9 and above. Learners will understand the factors that can influence self-identity, self-esteem and decision-making, including links to risky behaviours. They will explore the impact of prejudice, discrimination and bullying on individuals and mental health, as well as the relationship between mental ill-health, body image and emotional wellbeing. Learners will also develop an understanding of the risks associated with violent crime, weapons and substance use, alongside sources of support. In addition, they will explore the importance of respect and choice in healthy intimate relationships and understand how to maintain and promote good sexual health.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	36
Level	Level 2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) (Year 10) (L/652/3755/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners in Year 10 and above. By the end of this unit, learners will understand a range of factors that can affect health, wellbeing and personal safety. They will explore risks that may be encountered online and offline, the importance of equality and challenging inequality, and the role of consent in maintaining physical health. Learners will develop an understanding of health threats, common gynaecological health conditions and factors that can affect fertility, alongside ways to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. They will also explore the impact of financial wellbeing, media and misinformation on individuals' lives and relationships, and understand how change can be experienced positively and negatively.

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Guided learning hours (GLH)	36
Level	2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) (Year 11) (M/652/3756/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners in Year 11 and above. By the end of this unit, learners will understand the legislation, rights and choices that affect relationships, including laws relating to sexual offences and their impact on individuals. Learners will explore key information about pregnancy and reproductive health, develop an understanding of different forms of gender-based sexual violence, and consider how personal identity can influence relationships and experiences.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	24
Level	Level 2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Understand the Administration of Medication (L/650/5287/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners in aged 16 and above. This unit provides the knowledge and understanding needed to understand the administration of medication under the direction of a health professional.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	28

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Credit	3
Level	Level 3
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Safeguarding in Care Settings (A/652/0003/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 16 and above. This unit is aimed at those working in a wide range of care settings. It covers the important area of safeguarding individuals from abuse and identifies different types of abuse and the signs and symptoms that might indicate abuse is occurring. It considers when individuals might be particularly vulnerable to abuse and what a learner must do if abuse is suspected or alleged.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	30
Credit	3
Level	Level 3
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Administer Medication to Individuals and Monitor the Effects (A/651/9971/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	8 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 16 and above. This unit is for those who prepare for, administer and monitor the effects of medication on individuals. The unit applies to all medication used for and by individuals, both prescribed and non-prescribed.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	30
Credit	5

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Level	3
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Promote Communication in Care Settings (Y/651/7297/UNITCACHE)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 19 and above. This unit is aimed at those who work in a wide range of adult care settings. It covers the central importance of communication in adult care, and ways to overcome barriers to meet individual needs and preferences in communication.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	25
Credit	3
Level	Level 3
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Introduction to AI (D/652/2337/UNIT)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 14 and above. This unit introduces learners to the key concepts underpinning AI and its growing presence in everyday life and the workplace. Learners will explore what AI is, how it is used, and the types of content it can generate. The unit also develops learners' ability to check AI-generated content, equipping them with practical strategies and tools to assess authenticity and make informed judgements about the information they encounter.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	15
Credit	2
Level	2

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Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Continuous Learning in AI for the Workplace (R/652/2342/UNIT)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 14 and above. This unit recognises that AI is a rapidly evolving field and that staying current is essential for effective and responsible use in the workplace. Learners will explore why continuous learning matters, how to identify reliable sources of information about AI innovation, and how engaging with credible AI communities can support ongoing skills growth. Learners will take an active and enquiring approach to their own personal development in relation to AI.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	20
Credit	3
Level	Level 2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Ethical and Responsible Use of AI in the Workplace (L/652/2340/UNIT)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 14 and above. This unit examines the ethical considerations and personal responsibilities involved in using AI in a professional context. The unit develops learners' ability to identify ethical concerns, act with transparency and accountability, and use AI tools in a manner that is responsible, compliant and considerate of others.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	15

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Credit	2
Level	Level 2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**The Use of AI Tools and Prompts (F/652/2338/UNIT)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 14 and above. This unit develops learners' understanding of how AI tools can be used effectively in a workplace setting. Learners will explore the capabilities of common AI tools and develop skills in prompt writing. They will also reflect on the effectiveness of their approach, building the critical thinking skills needed to get the most from AI in their professional lives
Guided learning hours (GLH)	15
Credit	2
Level	2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Data and AI Systems (H/652/2339/UNIT)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 14 and above. This unit explores the fundamental role that data plays in the development and operation of AI systems. Learners will identify types of data and how they are classified, and why data quality matters for AI outcomes. The unit also introduces the legal, ethical and governance frameworks that shape how data must be handled in the workplace and develops learners' skills in managing data responsibly when using AI tools.

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Guided learning hours (GLH)	15
Credit	2
Level	2
Fee	£16.50

Unit programme	**Human Oversight When Working with AI Systems (M/652/2341/UNIT)**
Go-live date	15 October 2026
Useful information	This unit is suitable for learners aged 14 and above. This unit explores the critical role of human judgement in the responsible use of AI in the workplace. Learners will examine how AI can support workplace processes, while recognising that human oversight remains essential, particularly in high-risk or sensitive situations. The unit develops learners' ability to evaluate AI outputs, apply critical thinking, and make informed decisions.
Guided learning hours (GLH)	20
Credit	2
Level	Level 2
Fee	£16.50

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Amended qualifications

Qualifications	
	NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Introductory Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (601/8877/7) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Introductory Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Sport and Exercise Science) (601/8877/7/SES) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Introductory Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) (601/8877/7/OUT) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Introductory Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Working in Sport and Leisure) (601/8877/7/WIS) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Introductory Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Sports Coaching) (601/8877/7/COA) **NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (601/8878/9)** • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Sport and Exercise Science) (601/8878/9/SES) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) (601/8878/9/OUT) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Working in Sport and Leisure) (601/8878/9/WIS) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Certificate in Sport and Physical Activity (Sports Coaching) (601/8878/9/COA) **NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (540) in Sport and Physical Activity (601/8881/9)** • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (540) in Sport and Physical Activity (Sport and Exercise Science) (601/8881/9/SES) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (540) in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) (601/8881/9/OUT) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (540) in Sport and Physical Activity (Working in Sport and Leisure) (601/8881/9/WIS) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (540) in Sport and Physical Activity (Sports Coaching) (601/8881/9/COA) **NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (720) in Sport and Physical Activity (601/8882/0)** • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (720) in Sport and Physical Activity (Sport and Exercise Science) (601/8882/0/SES) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (720) in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) (601/8882/0/OUT) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (720) in Sport and Physical Activity (Working in Sport and Leisure) (601/8882/0/WIS) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Diploma (720) in Sport and Physical Activity (Sports Coaching) (601/8882/0/COA) **NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity (601/8883/2)** • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity (Sport and Exercise Science) (601/8883/2/SES) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) (601/8883/2/OUT) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity (Working in Sport and Leisure) (601/8883/2/WIS) • NCFE Active IQ Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport and Physical Activity (Sports Coaching) (601/8883/2)

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Summary of amendment	Minor amendments have been made across multiple units within the Qualification Specifications. The Summary of changes in the Qualification Specifications provides further details.
Date amendment comes into effect	2 November 2026

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Withdrawals

Unit programmes	**Unit Programmes** Please visit this document to find out which unit programmes are withdrawing.
Registration end date	01 December 2026 This is the last date we can accept learner registrations. Please ensure your learners are aware that these unit programmes are no longer available after the withdrawal date.
Certification end date	01 December 2026 This date matches the registration end date as we currently have no live learners on any of these unit programmes. This is the last date we can process learner certificates.
Reason for withdrawal	These unit programmes have had no registrations in recent years, and we are streamlining our offer in line with local and national skills needs. Although these standalone units are being withdrawn, they will remain in their parent qualification. To view our other available units, please visit our units page.

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Qualification	**NCFE CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Understanding Playwork (610/0644/0)**
Registration end date	30 November 2026 This is the last date we can accept learner registrations. Please ensure your learners are aware that this qualification is no longer available after the registration end date.
Late registration	**Consequences of failure to make timely registration before qualification withdrawal** As stated in your centre agreement under Section 10, you must ensure each learner is promptly registered in accordance with our Registration and Certification Policy. If your centre fails to register learners ahead of the qualification's withdrawal, this will be considered as malpractice or maladministration as it is in breach of our centre agreement. Should you make late registrations on any of our qualifications, your account will be referred to our Provider Assurance team for them to consider appropriate actions, which may include applying sanctions.
Certification end date	30 November 2027 This is the last date we can process learner certificates.
Reasons for withdrawal	This qualification is due to be withdrawn in England, Wales and Northern Ireland due to low learner enrolments.
Suitable alternative qualifications	Centres are encouraged to consider registering learners on one of the following alternative qualifications: • NCFE CACHE Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork (603/7635/1) • NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Playwork (610/0645/2)

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	Further information on these qualifications, including qualification specifications, can be found on the NCFE website.
Unit programmes	The following unit programmes will also be withdrawn: • Understand Play and the Playwork Principles (J/650/0596/UNITCACHE) • Creating Supporting Environments for Children's Play (K/650/0597/UNITCACHE) • Understand How to Support the Safeguarding of Children in the Playwork Setting (L/650/0598/UNITCACHE) • Understand Play and Wellbeing (M/650/0599/UNITCACHE)

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Qualifications	**NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (Adult Management) (603/6041/0/AM)** **NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (Adult Residential Management) (603/6041/0/ARM)**
Registration end date	04 May 2027 This is the last date we can accept learner registrations. Please ensure your learners are aware that these qualifications are no longer available after the withdrawal date.
Late registration	**Consequences of failure to make timely registration before qualification withdrawal** As stated in your centre agreement under Section 10, you must ensure each learner is promptly registered in accordance with our Registration and Certification Policy. If your centre fails to register learners ahead of the qualifications' withdrawal, this will be considered as malpractice or maladministration as it is in breach of our centre agreement. Should you make late registrations on any of our qualifications, your account will be referred to our Provider Assurance team for them to consider appropriate actions, which may include applying sanctions.
Certification end date	04 May 2030 This is the last date we can process learner certificates.
Reason for withdrawal	These qualifications have been replaced by the NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (610/7733/1) as part of the new Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)-approved Northern Ireland health and social care suite (Care in Practice (CiP) Framework).
Suitable alternative/ replacement qualification	These qualifications have been replaced by the NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland) (610/7733/1), which has a single structure with no pathways: all learners complete the same mandatory units, and choose optional units to reflect their role and service setting. Centres approved for 603/6041/0 will be automatically approved for the replacement. Centres with direct claims status (DCS) for 603/6041/0 will carry it across to the replacement, and there is no late registration fee for learners transferring.

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Bundles	**Level 5 Diplomas in HSC (Adult Management) and CCLD (Northern Ireland) Bundle (NDF6307)** **Level 5 Diplomas in HSC (Adult Residential Management) and CCLD (Northern Ireland) Bundle (NDF0775)**
Registration end date	04 May 2027 This is the last date we can accept learner registrations. Please ensure your learners are aware that these bundles are no longer available after the withdrawal date.
Reason for withdrawal	These bundles are being withdrawn due to low registrations.

Qualification	**NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice of Dental Nursing (610/3114/8)**
Registration end date	18 December 2026 This is the last date we can accept learner registrations. Please ensure your learners are aware that this qualification is no longer available after the withdrawal date.
Late registration	**Consequences of failure to make timely registration before qualification withdrawal** As stated in your centre agreement under Section 10, you must ensure each learner is promptly registered in accordance with our Registration and Certification Policy. If your centre fails to register learners ahead of the qualification's withdrawal, this will be considered as malpractice or maladministration as it is in breach of our centre agreement. Should you make late registrations on any of our qualifications, your account will be referred to our Provider Assurance team for them to consider appropriate actions, which may include applying sanctions.
Certification end date	18 December 2029

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	This is the last date we can process learner certificates.
Reason for withdrawal	This decision is due to the low intake of learner registrations on this qualification.
Suitable alternative/ replacement qualification	We have identified City & Guilds as the most suitable alternative. We have made contact with City & Guilds who will reach out soon. NCFE is committed to supporting all learners currently on programme through to completion of their qualification.

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