

NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Customer Service for Health and Social Care Settings

EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

TYPES OF CUSTOMERS

PRIVACY AND DIGNITY

SERVICE STANDARDS

TEAM WORKING

CONFLICT WITHIN TEAMS

Workbook 2

Section 1: Effective communication for health and social care

In this section you will learn about developing positive working relationships with customers in a health and social care setting. You will explore the different methods of communication and look at ways that you can interact effectively with customers in the health and social care setting.

Different customer relationships in health and social care

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

In any health or social care role, you will have:

- **Internal customers** – people who work for the same organisation or other departments within your organisation including support and administration staff and departments, managers and colleagues who depend on your input to do their own jobs.
- **External customers** – the individuals using the care service; their family, carers and supporters; other care professionals in different organisations; contractors and other care providers and organisations.

Did you know?

By treating people and departments in your own organisations as customers and meeting their expectations, you build better relationships with them which in turn helps external customer relationships because it means everyone is happy and everything runs smoothly.

The relationships you have as a health or care worker will depend on the organisation you work for and your job role. For example, in domiciliary care (caring for individuals in their own home) you will have different relationships than if you work as a hospital based healthcare worker.

Domiciliary workers will have more long term relationships with their external customers who will include:

- individuals using the care service
- their family and carers
- their care team – this might include a social worker, other care workers, GP and other professionals

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A healthcare worker based in a hospital may have similar customer contact but only work with individuals who are being cared for in the short term.

Customer relationships in health and social care can be:

- Working relationships with colleagues and team members and other health or care professionals with the same objectives and purpose.
- Professional relationships – relationships with individuals, their families and carers. Also relationships with professional organisations or people who you do not work with on a regular basis.

Knowledge Activity 1: For one health or social care role, describe the relationships with customers.



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The development and impact of positive working relationships

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 2 and 3.

Developing and maintaining positive working relationships with customers will help to ensure that you deliver excellent customer service and satisfy customer expectations.

Knowledge Activity 2: Think about organisations where you are the customer and you feel you have a positive relationship with the organisations. List the things that make you feel positive about the organisation and that make you remain a customer.



Lined area for writing answers to Knowledge Activity 2.

Your list might include some of the following:

- they are polite and professional
- they are efficient and meet requests promptly.
- they explain things in ways I can understand
- the information they give me is relevant to me
- they know and remember me
- they seem genuinely interested in helping me
- they keep me informed about what is happening about any queries, problems, requests etc.
- they solve problems efficiently with good outcomes

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- when they say they will do something they do it
- if they are unable to meet a request or solve an issue, they tell me and tell me why
- they meet my needs and preferences as far as possible

We will explore these ideas further as they demonstrate the principles of establishing and maintaining customer relationships:

- **Professionalism** – having a professional attitude and appearance will help the customer to have confidence in your ability to meet their needs and in the longer term will lead to them trusting you.
- **Respect** – being polite and respectful to people makes them feel valued and helps to maintain their dignity. In the longer term relationship, this will build their trust and confidence in you.
- **Efficiency** – being efficient and solving problems effectively helps to ensure that customer needs are continually met.
- **Communication** – making sure you communicate in ways that the customer understands means that they will know they can express their needs and you will understand; and that you can explain things to them.
- **Knowing your customer** – knowing about the customer shows an interest in them, is friendly and helps you better understand their needs. You will be able to give relevant information about care.
- **Genuine** – showing a genuine interest is friendly and shows that you value the person. It also shows that you consider the person as an individual.
- **Trustworthy** – trust is important in any relationship. If you make sure that you do things when you say you will and keep customers informed about what is happening and the progress of any requests or issues, this will help to build trust.
- **Honest** – you need to be honest, especially where you are unable to meet requests or solve issues. Tell the customer and tell them why. This again builds trust.
- **Empathy and understanding** – have empathy with the customer and understanding things from their point of view will mean that you are much more able to meet their needs and preferences effectively.

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These attitudes and behaviours will help to establish and maintain positive working relationships with customers. Positive working relationships have many benefits for the quality of customer service in the health and care setting:

- It will be easier to discuss and carry out care activities if relations with the customer are friendly and open.
- It is easier to provide the required information if you know the customer and can adapt communication to suit them.
- It is easier to meet the needs, expectations and preferences of customers if you know them and understand their needs and expectations.
- Treating customers as individuals means that their care is more likely to meet needs and expectations.

Positive working relationships can lead to excellent customer service but will also mean that customers feel able to raise any issues and can be confident that they will be addressed.

Did you know?

Even if customers have complaints, if they are dealt with efficiently and positively, customer relationships will still be good.



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Communication methods

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 4.

There are a variety of ways to communicate with others.

Knowledge Activity 3: Think about the ways you have communicated with other people today. List them here and in each case say why that method was most appropriate.



Handwriting practice area with horizontal lines and a large 'SAMPLE' watermark.

Face-to-face

Face-to-face communication means being in the same room as the person you are communicating with. You will use speaking and listening skills as well as body language to communicate. Body language includes gestures and facial expressions. It helps to make communication clearer which can lead to fewer misunderstandings in face-to-face discussions than in other forms of communication such as telephone or email.

Face-to-face communication is useful for the discussion of complex or sensitive information or problems. It is also useful for giving the same information to a number of people e.g. in a meeting or presentation. In face-to-face communication, people can ask questions and get an immediate response. A lot of communication with customers using health or care services will be face-to-face but, you may need to use other forms of communication with, for example, other care professionals.

POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

COMMUNICATION METHODS

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