

Care Skillsbase: Manage Skills

Follow up a Care Skillsbase Skills Check

Five steps

Step 1 Review the Skills Check documentation

Review the Skills Check feedback form and Personal development form. (If you did not administer the Skills Check, do this with the colleague who did.) Do the documents record any causes for concern regarding the member of staff's ability to deal with information and/or communicate? Identify any concerns not already recorded in the Skills Check documents as precisely as you can (e.g. this member of staff has an accent that makes them difficult to understand).

Step 2 Compare the Skills Check results with the skills required for the job

Use the results to decide if the person has the communication and number skills necessary to work safely and meet quality standards.

The simplest way to do this is to compare the Skills Check results with a communication and number skills specification for the job.

If your organisation has a document that specifies the communication and number skills required by the post, use that. If not, **either** use the Care Skillsbase template to create a simple job role specification (see Manage Skills/Meet your organisation's needs at www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk) **or** use the instructions at the end of these notes to create a makeshift specification now.

Compare the person's Skills Check results with whatever communication and number skills specification you are using. Does the Skills Check raise any concerns regarding the person's ability to deal with information and communicate in critical areas of the job?

If the Skills Check does give cause for concern, go to step 3.

If the Skills Check gives no cause for concern, go directly to step 4.

Tip If you have access to the person's CV and/or application form, compare what they say with the results of the Skills Check. Do the results of Skills Check tally with the information in the person's CV and/or application form? If not, you may wish to re-evaluate any decisions made.

Step 3 Assess the risk posed by limited communication and number skills

Identify the elements of the job that are **critical** to achieving the job's overall purpose.

Decide where success in those critical elements depends upon the member of staff dealing with information and communicating effectively.

What consequences might follow if the person does not deal with information and communicate effectively at those points? Would the consequences be serious? How serious?

Then consider how likely it is that the person will not deal with information and communicate effectively at those points. Is just a remote possibility, or quite likely?

The more serious and likely, the greater the risk.

Seriousness	Likelihood				
	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Near certain?
Insignificant					
Minor					Be careful
Moderate				Be careful	Watch out!
Severe			Be careful	Watch out!	Danger!
Disastrous?		Be careful	Watch out!	Danger!	Disaster!

Finally, consider how often the task or activity is undertaken and how critical the task or activity is to overall service delivery.

The more **frequent** and **critical** the task or activity, the greater the **risk** posed by the limited ability of the person to deal with information and communicate effectively.

If you have serious concerns about allocating certain duties to the person, either make sure you can support them adequately or allocate those duties to someone else.

Step 4 Monitor work performance

No matter what the results of the Skills Check, be sure to monitor the person closely until you have a clear understanding of their ability to deal with information and communicate in the job.

If monitoring reveals that the member of staff deals with information and communicates effectively, note this. Continue monitoring, but there is no reason to take further action.

Step 5 Respond quickly to any problems

If monitoring shows the person is not dealing with information and communicating effectively (i.e. as required to work safely and meet quality standards), take action quickly.

First, make sure the member of staff knows how they should be applying communication and number skills and to what standard. Do this by modelling (i.e. demonstrate the task to them).

If this resolves the problem, note this. Continue monitoring, but there is no reason to take further action at this point.

If monitoring and modelling do not work, speak to the person.

Confirm that the person knows what is expected of them and is:

- committed to achieving the required outcomes
- prepared to follow the agreed procedure in order to achieve the outcomes
- willing to apply communication and number skills to the best of their ability.

Explain the ways in which you consider:

- their current performance does not meet those expectations
- they are not dealing with information and communicating effectively
- failure to apply communication and number skills effectively stops them achieving the outcomes required.

Ask if the person feels this assessment of their performance is fair and accurate.

Note their response and, if appropriate, tell them that you will reflect on what they have said.

Meanwhile, ask the person to reflect on what you have said for a day or two and to consider if:

- they can think of another way to achieve the outcomes you require
- they would find any on-the-job or off-the-job support useful.

Schedule a follow-up meeting.

At the follow-up meeting agree how to resolve the situation (i.e. enable the person to achieve the desired outcomes). Options may include one or more of the following:

- redesigning the work process
- organising on- or off-the-job skills development/training (see Care Skillsbase | Manage Skills at www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk)

Whatever you agree, monitor and review the agreed solution regularly and be sure to involve the person as fully as possible in reviewing.

Quick communication and number skills specification

If you are working **without** a communication and number skills specification, use the instructions below to create a makeshift specification. You may find it helpful to refer to:

- official job description and person specification for the role
- quality standards and risk assessments related to key tasks within the role
- any record-keeping and report forms the person will have to complete as part of their work
- quality records associated with the work (e.g. records of previous complaints and/or incidents that indicate the sort of problems post-holders typically have to deal with)

First, briefly review the person's job, including:

- overall purpose
- principal tasks involved
- other significant requirements (e.g. participation in training, team meetings, appraisal)
- vocational skill level (e.g. NVQ 2).

Identify the elements of the job that are critical to achieving the job's overall purpose. Concentrate on these critical elements. First, note where the post-holder has to deal with important information. Consider:

- record-keeping and reporting
- risk management
- quality assurance

Again, concentrating only on the critical elements of the job, note where success depends on effective communication. Bear in mind the needs of people who use services, colleagues and outside agencies.

Consider the communication and number skills you would want a post-holder to bring to the role.

Call to mind other post-holders. What skills did effective post-holders bring to the job?
What skills did ineffective post-holders lack?

Now draw up a short list of what you consider the key communication and number skill competencies. (Five is enough.) To help you formulate your list complete this sentence: 'To be effective in this role, a person must be able to...' (e.g. make appropriate written entries in care plans or accurately monitor and record fluid intake.)

Use your list as a makeshift communication and number skills specification.