



Specialist Language Courses



South East  
Social Care Alliance

CASE STUDY:

# MASTERING COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL CARE

SUPPORTING  
OVERSEAS SOCIAL  
CARE WORKERS  
ACROSS THE  
SOUTH EAST

This case study looks at the challenges and successes of designing and delivering **Mastering Communication in Social Care**, a new blended English language and communication skills course for overseas social care workers, developed by SLC in partnership with the South East Social Care Alliance (SESCA).

## Background

SESCA contacted SLC in November 2023 to discuss a potential English language training programme for overseas care workers working for care providers across the region. This is part of SESCO's International Recruitment Funding Initiative, offering a range of training courses to migrant carers.

After much discussion, a short, focused course was created to enable carers to effectively engage in everyday conversations with service users in common working environments

## Developing Mastering Communication in Social Care

The course, Mastering Communication in Social Care, consists of eight one-hour study units:

1. Introducing yourself and welcoming service users
2. Talking about food and drink
3. Talking about personal care
4. Talking about mobility
5. Talking about pain
6. Talking about pressure area care
7. Talking about falls
8. Talking about mental health

Each unit consists of two care-specific scenarios. Learners learn key language and communicative skills and study how they are used in practice. The language is then activated, practised and extended in tutor-led group sessions.

The e-learning elements can be taken on any device. There is a course app for mobile phones. The

tutored lessons are on Zoom. The course is accredited by the CPD Standards Office, so providing a CPD certificate and points for participants.

## Delivering the first courses - challenges

While the course looked straightforward on paper, a number of challenges arose in practice that needed addressing from initial stages through to its end.

**1. Accessing the e-learning and online classes:** not everyone picked up the emails, the instructions proved too complicated for some participants to follow, some confused the links in the emails, and some deleted the Zoom link to lessons.

**2. Understanding the course structure:** understanding and engaging with a blended learning plus tuition course was a new experience for learners, getting e-learning done ahead of lessons proved difficult for some. Not everybody achieved their CPD certificate.

**3. Ensuring full attendance:** learners worked in multiple care organisations. Some had shifts scheduled when they were due to attend lessons, some struggled with Zoom.

**4. Evaluation forms:** evaluation forms were sent out after the last lesson had finished. Initial completion rates were not high. Several reminders were needed.



## Course outcomes

Attendance throughout the course averaged at 65%, with 62% of participants achieving their CPD certificates, having attended 3 out of 4 lessons and scored over 75% in their e-learning. However, feedback was positive, with 100% of participants stating they would recommend the course to others.

This was sufficient grounds for SESCO to commit a second tranche of courses but with the target of improving attendance and e-learning completion, streamlining communication and ensuring everyone finished on time.

## Delivering the second courses – improvements

We reviewed the first courses with SESCO. The following changes were made for the second tranche.

**1. Introductory sessions:** led by the teachers, these were implemented ahead of each course to make sure learners had activated their e-learning account, understood how Zoom worked, understood the course structure and what they needed to do to achieve their CPD certificate.

**2. Simplified communication:** The language in the emails was reviewed and simplified. Participants (or their employers) who hadn't confirmed their receipt of their invitation to the introductory session were phoned and/or texted to maximise attendance.

**3. Predictable reminders:** regular reminder messages were sent to participants for both the e-learning and the lessons.

**4. Evaluation forms:** these were given out by teachers at the end of the final lesson, rather than after, for participants to complete.

The changes made an immediate difference with higher attendance, higher e-learning completion and much less back and forth communication between SLC and participants.

## Course outcomes

Attendance throughout the course averaged at 77%, with 73% of participants achieving their CPD certificates. Feedback was again excellent, with 100% of participants stating they would recommend the course to others.

## In conclusion

Creating and delivering the courses proved a steep learning curve. However, we're delighted with the progress made over the two courses and feel we have a programme that can be used as is or further developed and tailored where required. We hope very much to grow our partnership with SESCO and to have the opportunity to deliver the course to overseas social care workers in other parts of the UK.



*“SLC's Mastering English for Social Care training course was always going to present initial challenges considering that the learners were coming from multiple care providers, so there was no single point of contact. It's also notoriously difficult to get care staff to commit to attending scheduled training, given the staffing challenges at the services where they work.*

*After the initial pilot, SLC proactively addressed these challenges. Adding a course introduction was crucial in ensuring learners understood the course requirements and could access the e-learning platform. What really made the difference was the exceptional support provided by the tutors and course coordinators. It has been fantastic to read the exceptionally positive feedback received from both the care staff who attended this training and their managers.”*

**Jonathan Payne**, International Recruitment  
Project Consultant at SESCO



# Mastering Communication in Social Care – Course Report

SESCA kindly provided a summary report based on the 50 evaluation forms received from the two set of courses.

## Overview

- The course aimed to improve social care specific communication skills among recently arrived overseas care workers.
- Evaluation feedback was received from 50 attendees, the majority of whom were Care Assistants (10% were Senior CAs).
- Respondents came from all 9 Care Association Regions in the South East, with were from various counties, notably Surrey (22%), Hampshire (20%) and the Isle of Wight (18%).
- The majority (50%) work in homecare/ domiciliary care agencies and 38% work in residential homes.
- Organisation Size: Most respondents (58%) were from small organizations (10-49 staff), although there was quite a mix.
- Visa Status: 94% of respondents were working under a sponsored visa, and most (68%) had been working in the UK for 6-12 months.
- Country of Origin: The majority were from India (44%), Zimbabwe (22%) and Ghana (20%).

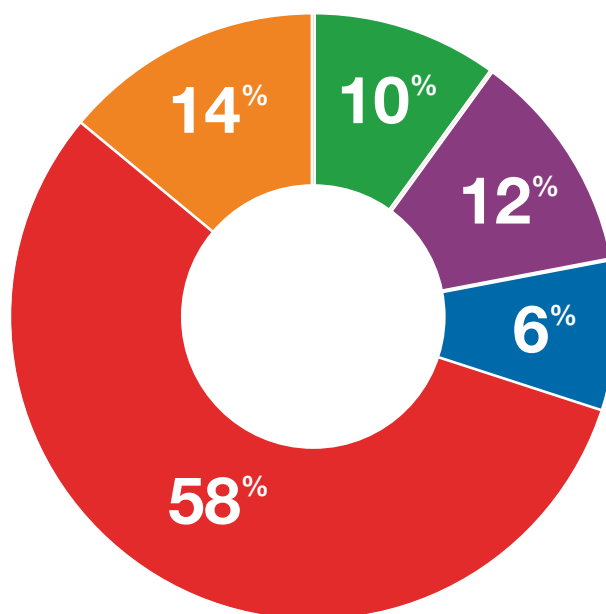
## Course Feedback

- Content Quality: 86% rated it as excellent.
- Course Structure: 76% rated it as excellent.
- Instructor Effectiveness: 82% rated the instructor as excellent.
- E-learning Usefulness: 82% found it very useful.
- Communication Improvement: 76% found the course extremely effective in improving communication skills.
- **Recommendation: 100% would recommend the course to other sponsored care workers.**

## How large is the organisation you work at?

50 responses

- 1-9 staff (micro)
- 10-49 staff (small)
- 50-249 staff (medium)
- 250+ staff (large)
- Not sure



## Comments and Suggestions

Positive feedback highlighted the course's effectiveness, enjoyable content, and excellent instructors. Suggestions for improvement included extending the course duration, adding more reading materials, and providing a clear timetable.

### Course Effectiveness

- *The course was very effective and everyone participated*
- *Honestly everything from content, interaction and role plays was very good*
- *The course was very helpful. I really enjoyed it.*

### Personal and Professional Impact

- *Yes this course was very useful to me I have improve the way I can communicate with service users and professionals because it has increased my confidence*
- *It's very good the group and conversation*
- *The content is very educative, simple to understand, looking forward to having such of more trainings.*
- *This need for everyone*
- *I got more knowledge from these courses*
- *It's very good instrumental for my job*
- *It's very helpful and I learned so many new techniques thanks*

### Instructor Feedback

- *To be honest never change a winning format. The teacher and the course were both really amazing*
- *Did not find any fault it was well organised our instructor was good and lovely*
- *Thanks to Diana, they were really helpful when i had issues to complete my course*
- *Thank you to the SLC team and especially to the Trainer Mary , she was amazing*
- *I would like to thank Diana, who supported me to redo the 1st two units I had submitted without completing. Thank you for giving the opportunity to complete them.*
- *Thank you so much for your time and hard work for making us better*

- *Mary is the best she is good at what she does*
- *Its been an interesting course and our Tutor Mary is a Top Notch.*
- *Marie was. Really a good instructor and she just made me feel very comfortable while lessons and her way of speaking and Making us understanding things was incredible . Loads of love to you Marrie. Will miss u. Hope i will see u in any other courses. Thank you.*
- *Yes, I would like to thank my instructor Mary. She is really good, help me a lot to improve my communication skills and also provide extra information that assist me to learn different accents of people. Thank you so much Mary.*

### General Positive Feedback

- *I really enjoyed it. I have learnt a lot. Thank you*
- *The course was very helpful. I really enjoyed it.*
- *I don't think there is anything need to improve.*
- *Thank you so much for your help and support*
- *No this is very good way for learning*

### Suggestions for Improvement

- *Please if the course can run longer, its very informative. When I was getting to enjoy it more and be more engaging it was finishing.*
- *There should be provision for students to restart each courses where students score below 80%*
- *I would like you to add more reading material*
- *In the answer section, firstly I didn't get the idea about how to do the answer. I clicked 3 times by mistakely on the answer section below and I lost the mark. I got the idea only after 2 topics. so I think this is a good idea to include the explanation about that.*
- *Make a proper time table send to the participants. So that we have any confusion about the course.*



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