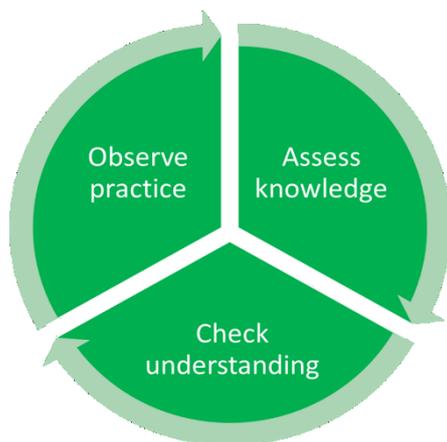


Top Tips

The introduction of the Care Certificate (1st April 2015) for Health and Social Care (H&SC) has increased the focus on observation because of the requirement to evidence worker competence “during real work duties”. Assessing knowledge, checking understanding and observing practice are critical elements of evidencing competence together with feedback about the service(s) being provided.



H&SC workers have a duty of care to continuously observe the people they support, keeping records about progress and changes.

Supervisors and managers need to observe their staff whilst working with the individuals they support. Therefore, both managers and workers will need the skills to be able to observe behaviour and events accurately and to record them clearly and concisely.

A manager using attentive observation skills will reinforce good practice, providing a consistent message, enabling workers to build their knowledge, skills, confidence and competence.

Observation Skills

- ✓ **Attentiveness** - It is essential to be alert and to concentrate.
- ✓ **Awareness** - You will need to understand different behaviours and how people interact with each other in different situations.
- ✓ **Objectivity** - Do not allow your personal biases (emotions, values, and past experiences) to interfere with your ability to record accurately what is happening.
- ✓ **Positioning** - Physically position yourself in a way that maximizes your ability to observe. It is good for assessors to participate whilst observing because it will facilitate better relationships with workers and individuals, rather than being officious. You must retain your focus on the observation and what is happening.

Observation of a worker's practice will contribute towards the evaluation of the effectiveness of the support provided.

Practical Considerations

Deal with poor practice immediately – Do not wait!

- ✓ **Criteria** - Agree what will be covered with the worker so they can prepare for the observation.
- ✓ **Time** - Discuss with the worker the best time to do the observation.
- ✓ **Consent** - Check if consent is required before undertaking an observation.
- ✓ **Record** - Be transparent and communicate clearly the date and time of the observation.
- ✓ **Stress** - Put the learner and individual at ease before the observation to reduce stress.
- ✓ **Write up** - Facts of an observation should be documented in a positive manner.
- ✓ **Standards** - Ensure you write down references to any standards linked to the observation.
- ✓ **Development** - Provide constructive feedback about practice and areas for development.
- ✓ **Risk** - Consider the environment and carry out a risk assessment before an observation.

Think about what standards can be covered from a single holistic observation. The worker may conduct a risk assessment, use communication skills, promote values like dignity and choice, follow health & safety procedures, refer to documentation etc. You can check and date these but also ensure you add written evidence about how these standards were demonstrated.

What to Record

These questions will help you to identify what should be documented.

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	How?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was involved Witnessed Responded Took what action Was notified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happened Actions Were the results Evidence exists Was said Equipment Follow up needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did it happen Was evidence found Were people located 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did it happen Was it discovered Did people arrive Was it resolved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was it discovered Was information obtained Did it occur (accident or intentional - facts not opinion) Did you react

We aim to understand why things happen so we can continually improve

Observation Record Example

Vague	Ricky did a good job of supporting Mrs K to get up and dressed.
Specific	15.05.15 - I observed Ricky supporting Mrs K. He greeted Mrs K appropriately and took a moment to read her file. He supported clothing choices and talked through the steps required to assist her out of bed. They risk assessed together. Mrs K felt dizzy so they took it more slowly than normal. Ricky checked, reassured and encouraged throughout. I asked Mrs K for her opinion and she was natural in her response confirming Ricky was providing excellent support. She felt interactions were sometimes rushed. I made a note to review this. I observed competent practice in risk assessment, person centred support, choice, mutual respect, positive interactions, concerns being raised and addressed, good moving techniques.

Report Writing

Deal with any urgent issues straight away – Do not wait!

- ✓ **Plain English** - Do not use slang or jargon.
- ✓ **Accurate and specific** - Do not include information that has not been established as accurate.
- ✓ **Factual** - Include statements that can be proven, based on reasoning and facts.
- ✓ **Objective** - Fair and impartial. Not influenced by opinion.
- ✓ **Timely** - Document while the information is fresh to ensure accuracy.
- ✓ **Concise** - Do not omit important details but use words economically. Reports must be brief, concise, and relevant.
- ✓ **Efficient** - Present relevant information in the most efficient manner with the greatest possible clarity.
- ✓ **Well organised** - You may need to follow your organisation's format. Plan to present the information in a logical order. If you do not have a structure, you could use chronological order.
- ✓ **Clear** - A well-written report is unambiguous and understandable. Multiple readers should be able to reach the same conclusions from reading it.
- ✓ **Legible** - A report has no value to other people unless they can read it.
- ✓ **Grammar and Spelling** - If this is not a strong area, use a computer with grammar and spell checker.
- ✓ **Confidential** - Unauthorised people must not see your report and you should not name people being supported in staff observations (use initials or codes). Follow your policies and procedures.

Feedback Sandwich

- ✓ Always begin with explaining what was positive before identifying areas for development.
- ✓ Encourage the worker to reflect on their practice and take an active role in their development.
- ✓ Always end feedback on a positive note with praise, encouragement and clear, practical actions.

"Assessment evidence must be collected during real work activity. Simulated evidence can only be used where the evidence could not reasonably be assessed in a real work situation or is unlikely to occur during the induction period, e.g. basic life support." Care Certificate Framework for Assessors