

# Why I chose to take the [Care Adviser Award](#)

By Catriona Lumiste

[The Care Act](#) is intended to simplify the law and guidance around choosing and paying for adult care. Changing how care and support needs are paid for reiterates the need for specialist advice to enable people to make informed decisions in planning for their care. From my own personal experience of helping friends and their families, and with my clients, when making decisions around care for a loved one and the financial implications of such care I realised it could be a challenging experience for many. This was one of the reasons I decided to take the Care Adviser Award.

I have always worked with the later life market in my role as a financial planner and after I had achieved my [SOLLA](#) accreditation in 2013 I was keen to develop a specialisation in this area. It is a market I really enjoy working with and one where I wanted to expand my knowledge and experience. It is important that I give people enough information to make informed decisions in structuring their finances and planning to fund care and to consider advice in a holistic way. As a Care Fees specialist I felt it was fundamental to take the Care Adviser Award to evidence that I had achieved the required knowledge and understanding of our care system in the UK

The Care Adviser will give individuals confidence that those who have achieved it have a good knowledge, experience and understanding of choosing and paying for adult care. It will also give advisers the opportunity to work with unregulated care advisers in providing adult care advice, an area which I believe is fundamental with the introduction of the Care Act.

I believe to be an effective Care Fees Planner it is important to have a good working knowledge and understanding of choosing and paying for care and this includes the regulated and unregulated aspects of advice.

I would strongly recommend the [Care Adviser Award](#) to anyone who is really committed to the care market, it is a great opportunity to understand the regulated and unregulated aspects of care fees planning advice – whether or not clients are self funders. This is a growing area and one that requires the knowledge and skills of a specialist adviser, at the moment there are not enough specialist advisers to cover the demand for care fees planning advice. Now is a good time to undertake this award and achieve the [SOLLA Care Advice Standard](#) to demonstrate your specialist expertise in this market.

## **Frequently asked Q&A's**

### **What is the Care Adviser Award?**

The Care Adviser Award is an online assessment providing independent certification of the required standard and giving reassurance that those who have achieved it can be trusted to give accurate information and advice on choosing and paying for later life care which is relevant and appropriate to their circumstances. It is a way for specialist advisers to show their commitment to the care market. The aim of the Care Adviser Award is to promote a standard to care advice, integrate regulated with unregulated advice and make it easier to identify and access those who provide specialist advice.

### **What does the award consist of?**

Each candidate must complete:

*Section 1* – 50 Multiple Choice Questionnaire within 1 hour

*Section 2* – Two Case Study exercises within 2 hours

To pass a minimum of 75% must be achieved on each part of the 3 hour on line assessment. The award will evidence a good working knowledge and understanding of information and advice on care issues. You will be warned that Section 2 is time intense – I ran out of time and did not write everything I wanted to during my assessment, please be prepared for this to happen and get through it as quickly as you can without compromising the quality of your answers. You can apply to do the Care Adviser Award online at a time and date to suit your circumstances – unlike some where the dates are scheduled in advance.

### **Who is the Care Adviser Award for?**

Anyone who is giving information and/or advice on choosing and paying for adult care, even if this is just a small part of your role or service provision. For example, Adult social care and NHS teams, care agency/home workers, support brokers, personal assistants, specialist care advice agencies, financial advisers, solicitors, advice teams from voluntary organisations/charities and other professionals

This Care Adviser award is also an essential part of the SOLLA Care Advice Standard which is available to unregulated advisers and SOLLA Accredited later life advisers

The SOLLA Care Advice Standard has been developed to meet the need of ensuring a consistent quality in providing information and advice including how a care need is identified, met and funded.

The standard affords independent recognition of your advice and information providing skills whilst helping to identify you to the public as someone who will understand their needs and to provide help.

### **Why is this standard important?**

The ageing population and the advent of the Care Act 2014 has led to a rapid growth in the care profession and the ever increasing wealth of information and advice available from a variety of sources. This can only be useful if it is consistently accurate, personalised and to a standard that is widely recognised.

What subject areas have to be studied to prepare for the award?

*Choosing care for adults* – types of care, housing options, local community resources and appropriate signposting/referrals, including how to access help from the Local Authority and raise safeguarding concerns.

*Funding Care for adults* – benefit entitlement, NHS and Local Authority funding, accessing care for an adult in need, raising safeguarding and deprivation of liberty concerns and how to access specialist advice independent financial/legal advice.

### **Tips for anyone taking the award**

As a starting point I would strongly recommend [The Complete Care Adviser book](#), this is a fundamental part of the preparation and will give you a good structure to follow in preparation for the assessment. Reading the book will also give ideas of the areas on which you may be weaker and will give you plenty of reference points on how to obtain further information.

I would also recommend attending a Local Authority Self Funders, Benefits, Information and Advice course, this is a good opportunity to run through some real life case studies and apply knowledge. The course is run by [SOLLA](#) and presented by Nicola Taylor, Taylored Training.

The Care Adviser Network provides some really useful elearning resources and a FREE short multiple choice quiz to test your knowledge and see if you are ready to take the assessment. I found this useful before I booked my assessment.

### **How long would you recommend as study time before taking the assessment?**

It is difficult to say as this assessment is relevant to so many people in different roles therefore levels and depth of knowledge will be dependent on the role. When you feel ready to take the exam try the quiz first to confirm you are sufficiently knowledgeable to give yourself the best chance of passing it first time.

### **How do know if I am ready for the assessment?**

I found the entire subject area was quite wide so it was difficult to gauge when I felt ready to sit the assessment. The multiple choice quiz was really helpful in testing my knowledge for section 1. The [Care Adviser Network provides a workbook](#) (at a reasonable cost!) that outlines typical case studies. I found working through the case studies was invaluable because it allowed me to time myself under exam conditions and it also gave me a good idea of the types of scenarios that would be tested therefore making me better prepared for assessment day!

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