



## **Feedback Summary (as at 1/9/25): Health and Wellbeing Core Skill Standards**

The proposed Health and Wellbeing Core Skill Standards are designed to align with the various New Zealand Certificates in Health and Wellbeing. Developed in partnership with industry, these standards are intended to be transferable across different roles and settings and build on one another with increasing complexity across NZQF levels. The core skill standards will make up only a portion of the total credits required for each qualification. Role-specific skill standards will be developed in due course to serve as electives, enabling programmes to be tailored to specific roles and settings and to make up the remaining credits.

The national consultation on the draft skill standards closed at the end of August 2025. We would like to thank everyone who shared their expertise, experiences, and perspectives during this process. Your feedback is helping ensure the standards reflect the needs of the sector.

### **What you told us...**

#### **What you liked**

The inclusion of technology use and personal wellbeing in the standards, particularly the recognition of social media safety as increasingly relevant for those supported in the sector. The standards were also praised for providing a strong foundation and for effectively reflecting the diverse roles, settings, and cultural contexts within the health and wellbeing sector.

#### **Transferability across sector roles**

Feedback received is that these standards are generally transferable across health and wellbeing roles. Some challenges may exist for those in small residential or community settings where there may not be diverse client bases or where a worker is only supporting one person, but this should be able to be negated using simulated environments. Flexibility in assessment conditions has been requested for lone workers and highly autonomous roles.

#### **Progressions and level alignments**

Most respondents agreed the skill standards show a clear and logical progression from Level 2 to Level 4, aligning well with NZQF descriptors. The language used reflects the increase in complexity, with learners advancing from identifying and describing to



analysing and evaluating, alongside growing expectations for autonomy, problem-solving, and collaboration. Some overlap between Levels 2 and 3 was noted, particularly in tasks involving familiar activities. While Level 4 generally reflects more complex demands, some respondents felt a stronger emphasis on leadership and responsibility would help more clearly differentiate it from Level 3.

## **Credit values**

Most respondents expressed support for increasing the total credit value of the Level 4 core skill standards from 40 to 60 credits (out of the total of the 120 credits required). They felt this change would better reflect the depth, complexity, and level of responsibility expected at Level 4, and would allow adequate time for meaningful learning and assessment. It was noted that the increased credit value would help solidify learners' understanding and support the development of more advanced skills.

## **Simulated Environments**

Respondents generally supported using simulated environments for specific learning outcomes, especially when real-life opportunities are limited, unsafe, or unavailable—such as emergencies; responding to abuse, neglect or violence; practicing trauma-informed responses; or sensitive communication. Simulations were valued for lone workers and entry-level learners to safely build competence and for those lacking access to culturally diverse settings. However, many agreed that areas like authentic relationship building, whānau collaboration, reporting changes and professional values are best assessed in real practice due to their complexity.

## **Terminology**

The term “Behaviours of concern” was highlighted as problematic terminology as it implies that a person’s behaviour is the issue, rather than a response to unmet needs or distress. Alternatives such as “expressions of need or distress” and “signs of distress or discomfort” were more positively received for their person-centred framing. Final terminology will be defined in the skill standard and further clarification around language will be provided in the programme guidance document. Most respondents found the remaining terminology generally appropriate but noted the importance of cultural inclusivity, consistency and clarity.

## **Strengths based principles**

Suggestion that there needs to be more explicit guidance on applying strength-based principles identifying, valuing, and building on the person’s abilities, preferences, and resources so that support plans go beyond minimising risk and actively promote autonomy, engagement, and wellbeing.



## **Dignity of Risk**

Suggestion to strengthen understanding of dignity of risk: The standards should highlight that over-managing risk can create psychological harm, reduce autonomy, and reinforce a risk-averse culture leading to poorer long-term outcomes. Personal plans should balance risks and support informed choice. At Level 4, learners should be able to develop positive risk-taking plans, not just implement risk management processes.

## **Neurodiversity content**

Suggestions were made that the core skill standards could be strengthened across all levels to better reflect the needs of people with neurodevelopmental conditions. To ensure broad relevance across the health and wellbeing sector, it is important that the core skill standards remain generic in nature. However, Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) are encouraged to contextualise their programmes to meet the needs of specific groups, including neurodivergent communities. In response to the feedback received, we will provide additional neurodiversity guidance within programme guidance documentation to support inclusive, affirming practice. We will also explore the development of skill standards specifically related to neurodiversity that can be offered as electives within programmes of study and make targeted amendments to core standard content where appropriate.

## **Suggestion of missing content**

One recipient felt the standards were missing essential content including around topics like infection control, falls prevention, medication safety, pressure injury prevention, chronic conditions, health promotion and nutrition. This content will be developed during the next phase of the skill standard development project where the sector will be able to determine the specific skills required for different roles and environments using current qualifications.

## **Actions**

We have taken all feedback received into consideration and the skill standards and programme guidance document are being updated accordingly.

## **Next steps**

Updated standards will be sent to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for review and once approved these will be listed on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards (DASS). The aim is to have these standards approved before Toitū te Waiora is disestablished in December 2025.



We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to share their views. Your feedback is helping ensure these standards are fit-for-purpose and responsive to the diverse needs of the sector.