

How to select a first aid training provider



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Introduction

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) doesn't vet, check or approve training providers or courses for you. The onus is on you to perform your own due diligence and ensure that the course and how it's delivered, meets the standards outlined by the HSE and, most importantly, your needs.

With so many first aid training providers in the UK, it can be challenging to know who to select. But the variety of providers and course options means you are able to make a choice that not only meets, but maybe even exceeds, your needs.

To help make your due diligence process easier, in this guide we've set out:

- The different first aid training options available to choose from
- A brief overview of the five due diligence checks you need to carry out
- A checklist of the due diligence questions you should ask
- A table of accepted trainer and assessor qualifications
- A summary of how Red Cross Training can help you meet (and exceed) your workplace needs

We hope that this guide helps you find the right first aid training course and provider.



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1

**The different
workplace first aid
training options
available**

The different workplace first aid training options available

The HSE offers you flexibility as an employer to choose the course and training provider that best suits your needs. You can choose from a range of different external providers, or even opt for in-house training. Whatever approach you select, you need to ensure that you carry out the right due diligence. (See ss.60-67 of the [HSE's First aid at work: The Health and Safety \(First-Aid\) Regulations 1981. Guidance on Regulations L74](#) ("the HSE's Guidance")).

Even if you don't need to carry out full due diligence on the training provider, you do still need to check if the training syllabus and how it's delivered meets your needs. The same applies for service levels and quality assurance standards. These aspects will all vary, even if they meet the HSE's requirements.

We cover all of the due diligence checks you should complete in the next section and the reasons why.

1

The Voluntary Aid Societies (VAS): British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and St Andrew's First Aid

The HSE recognises the VAS as the standard setters for currently accepted first-aid practice.

The VAS produce the First Aid Manual – the UK's only comprehensive guide to treating casualties in first aid emergencies.

The VAS also form part of the First Aid Quality Partnership (FAQP), alongside other leading experts in the field.. The FAQP publishes recommended quality assurance standards for all training providers to follow (and is observed by the HSE).

2

Training providers offering courses certificated by an 'awarding organisation' (AO).

These providers offer nationally recognised Emergency First Aid and First Aid at Work courses.

By choosing a provider that is working under an awarding organisation, you can be confident they are following policies and quality assurance systems set out by the AO to ensure they meet the HSE's requirements.

The AO regulates providers to ensure that they continue to meet the standards they have set (although each AO's service standards and approaches will vary).

The different workplace first aid training options available

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Providers operating under voluntary accreditation schemes (such as a trade or industry body).

Certain bodies such as the Federation of First Aiders only accept training providers that meet their criteria. As with AOs, each body's criteria will differ but should still align to the HSE's standards.

4

Providers that operate independently of any accreditation scheme.

Just because independent providers aren't members of an accreditation scheme, it doesn't mean that they won't meet your needs, but you'll need to carry out further checks yourself to establish whether they meet all the due diligence criteria set out by the HSE. The checks should be repeated if you book courses at a later date to ensure that they continue to meet these standards.

5

In-house training

If you choose to provide in-house training then you'll effectively have to prove that you can provide the same standards of training as any external training provider, meeting the standards outlined by the HSE. This may create an additional upfront burden but some larger organisations find that this is a useful way to offer basic first aid training. Many will take a hybrid approach and outsource more specialised first aid training.

2


Blended learning: what you need to know

Blended learning: what you need to know

Distance learning has been rising in popularity over the past decade and the impact of COVID-19 is likely to see demand accelerate further. [The Global Market Insights E-Learning Market Trends 2020-2026](#) research report forecasts that the eLearning market will grow by **8% growth between 2020-2026** and that the coronavirus pandemic will drive demand for virtual classroom-based learning even further.

The HSE doesn't allow first aid courses to be taught exclusively online due to the practical, hands-on nature of many of the skills taught, but they do allow you to choose a blended learning option.

If you do choose this option, the HSE emphasises that you should ensure that "sufficient time is allocated to classroom based learning and assessment of the practical elements of the syllabus". They also strongly recommend that learners are observed to ensure they are competent in any skills, especially those that are practical in nature e.g. CPR.



“Blended learning is a combination of face to face and e-learning and is an accepted means by which workplace first-aid training can be delivered.”

(See s.62 of the HSE's Guidance)

How much eLearning can form part of blended first aid learning?

How much can be taught online depends on the nature of the course syllabus and the level of practical skills included. The HSE's [Selecting a first aid training provider: A guide for employers](#) (GEI63) details the minimum course duration but is not clear about how much must be delivered face-to-face.

The First Aid Quality Partnership (FAQP)* publishes recommended quality assurance standards for all training providers to follow. They recommend the following minimum face-to-face learning duration for each type of course:

The FAQP's agreements are not regulatory but are developed by leaders in the industry who look at the courses as a whole to ensure they are both clinically and educationally sound. If you choose a course that doesn't meet the recommendations above, your choice may still be valid so long as you can explain and justify the choice of delivery and that it meets due diligence.

*The FAQP members include: St John Ambulance, British Red Cross, St Andrew's First Aid, Royal Lifesaving Society, Royal College of Emergency Medicine, Resuscitation Council (UK), First Aid Industry Body, National Police Chief's Council / College of Policing, Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, Chief Fire Officers Association, Faculty of pre-hospital care – Royal College of Surgeon Edinburgh, Chair / Vice Chair of the FAAO forum.)

Course	Total course minimum hours	Minimum face-to-face learning hours
Emergency First Aid at Work	6	4
First Aid at Work	18	12
First Aid at Work Requalifying	12	16
Emergency Paediatric First Aid	6	6
Paediatric First Aid	12	6

How much eLearning can form part of blended first aid learning?

Blended learning can offer a number of benefits, such as flexibility, greater convenience and lower costs. Whatever option you choose should meet your individual learners' needs. Some may prefer purely face-to-face classes where they can focus on practical activities and ask questions in a team-based environment. Others may learn best with interactive, virtual classroom-based learning, whilst some learners may prefer bite-sized, on-demand eLearning modules.

It's for you to decide what will fulfil your needs and perform the correct due diligence.



3

Due diligence checks

Due diligence checks

You must ensure that your chosen training provider meets the HSE's criteria in five key areas. These are set out in their guidance: [Selecting a first aid training provider: A guide for employers](#)" (GEI63).

You need to check that any training provider:

- 1) has suitably qualified trainers and assessors
- 2) operates effective quality assurance procedures
- 3) teaches currently accepted first aid practice
- 4) provides a suitable training syllabus that meets your needs
- 5) issues compliant first aid certificates

If you do opt for blended learning for first aid training, then you must conduct due diligence checks to ensure that it is suitable (s.62 of the Guidance). You must be satisfied that:

- 1) the learner knows how to use the technology that delivers the training.
- 2) the training provider can adequately support the individual during their training.
- 3) the training provider has a robust system in place to prevent identity fraud.
- 4) sufficient time is allocated to classroom-based learning and assessment of the practical elements of the syllabus.
- 5) the provider has an appropriate means of assessing the e-learning component of the training.

The HSE requirements are just the starting point

It's important to remember, though, that meeting the due diligence criteria should just be the beginning of your checks.

Just like with school, it's not the Ofsted rating or the teachers' qualifications that make a captivating environment where learning is inspiring, informative and interesting. It ultimately comes down to whether the training ethos is best suited to your learners' needs. Each provider will vary in what resources and methodologies they use to bring the curriculum alive, their training style and the methods they use to adapt to each person's preferred way of learning.

Your workplace is unique. Your employees are unique. And your first aid training needs will often be unique. So don't stop at the necessary due diligence, but carry out additional checks to make sure that they're a good fit for your workplace needs.

In the next section, we've summarised the checks the HSE requires you to carry out, followed by a handy checklist of required and recommended checks. We have pre-completed how Red Cross Training meets or exceeds each one and provided two columns for you to easily compare other providers.



Photo © /BRC.

Trainers/Assessors

The HSE specifies that all trainers and assessors must hold a **First Aid at Work (FAW) certificate unless they are exempt from doing so because of prior medical training as a doctor, nurse or paramedic. (Exemptions aren't automatic because licenses/registration and first aid skills must be relevant and suitable.) Assessors also need to hold a relevant training qualification.. (See the table on the next page for a list of acceptable training and assessment qualifications.)**

You should check how often training and skills updates for first aid trainers and assessors are carried out, how it is delivered and if they take steps to develop their staff further.

British Red Cross

Is there a documented quality assurance plan?

We have a documented and robust plan to ensure high quality training is consistent across our business.

Does an independent body with no vested interest audit the plan?

We are audited regularly to maintain our ISO:9001 2015 quality management accreditation.

Are trainers and assessors assessed annually as a minimum?

The training and assessing teams are coached and observed at least quarterly.

Does the designated person have a First Aid at Work certificate or qualify for an exemption? Do they have the required assessing/verifying qualification?

Yes, the designated person has a current First Aid at Work certificate and holds the new QCF level 4 qualification in Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice recognised by all leading UK awarding organisations and regulators.

How experienced are they with managing effective quality assurance procedures?

All members of the training management team are responsible for quality assurance and hold a current First Aid at Work certificate. They also have extensive knowledge and experience in managing effective quality assurance procedures.

Quality Assurance

Training providers should have a documented quality assurance plan where an individual is responsible for quality assurance. The plan should ensure that trainers and assessors' performance is assessed at least annually and include a course evaluation and complaints procedure.

External quality assurance accreditation demonstrates that providers are meeting the minimum standards required by the HSE. This could be through a regulated awarding organisation or alternatives, such as ISO 9001, which is the most widely used and accepted quality management standard in the world.

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Quality Assurance: further considerations

The HSE requires that all providers have a documented evaluation and complaints procedure, but it's how each provider deals with these that's important. Do they perform well and use feedback constructively?

You should ask to see figures on satisfaction levels and look at review sites. Do they have lots of positive reviews (and are the reviews constructive regarding the outcomes achieved)? Also, consider asking your peers in other organisations and your social network who they would recommend and why.

- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer satisfaction benchmark measurement taken from asking customers how likely they are to recommend an organisation's product or service to others on a scale of 0-10.

British Red Cross

Is there a documented course evaluation procedure?

All learners complete an evaluation form at the end of the course. We also provide post course feedback for those organisations that require it so they can assess how our training impacts on their learning and development programmes.

Is there a documented complaints procedure?

Yes. Our complaints procedure is documented and available upon request.

How do they monitor and act on feedback or complaints?

We monitor, and analyse all attendee feedback from our surveys and even online review sites. This enables us to understand and implement customer-led best practice and ensures continual improvement.

What are their timescales for responding to feedback and complaints?

All customer feedback is directed to our dedicated customer care manager to be reviewed and acted upon within a maximum of 10 working days. We achieve this 99.9% of the time.

How likely are their customers to recommend their courses to a friend?

Our Net Promoter Score* is above 90% (90%+ is deemed excellent). We have achieved such a high recommendation level due to our commitment to continuous improvement over 30 years.

What do online reviews say?

We score "Excellent" on Trustpilot from over 3,450 reviews.

How do you feel after speaking with them?

Give us a quick call! Are we knowledgeable, professional and friendly? Are we a good fit?

Teaching currently accepted first-aid practice

Any First Aid at Work (FAW) or Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) course should follow currently accepted first-aid practice:

- Adult basic life support: This should follow the guidelines published by the Resuscitation Council (UK)
- Other aspects of first aid: This should follow the current guidelines published by the Voluntary Aid Societies (e.g. British Red Cross, St John's Ambulance and Saint Andrews).

Providers can follow other published guidelines if they are supported by a responsible body of medical opinion but this does make your due diligence much more difficult as protocols for first aid can vary.

The guidelines are updated regularly but there is always new research and science that informs best practice. You should therefore check how often they update their course materials and what sources they use to do so.

British Red Cross

Are they teaching currently accepted first aid practice?

Yes, as a Voluntary Aid Society (VAS), the HSE acknowledges us in their Guidance as a standard-setter for currently accepted first aid practice.

We also produce the First Aid Manual along with the other Voluntary aid societies – this is currently the UK's only comprehensive guide to treating casualties in first aid emergencies.

Does their teaching follow other published guidelines supported by a responsible body of medical opinion?

N/A. Our syllabus follows currently accepted first aid practice.

How often are course materials reviewed and updated to keep in line with current clinical and educational best-practice?

Continuously. Our dedicated research team reviews all clinical and first aid research currently available around the world. We produce our own international guidelines based on these.

This approach to research along with our business structure means we can roll out changes quickly to align with current best practice.

Teaching currently accepted first-aid practice

It's important to check if the course content and how it's delivered meets the needs of your workplace and individual learners' needs. (Note: Practical elements such as CPR can only realistically be taught face-to-face.)

The HSE sets minimum training hours for the FAW and EFAW courses to ensure that the topics are taught properly (FAW: 18 hours over three days, EFAW: 6 hours over one day). If a provider offers additional topics, then they should allow extra time to do so. You should also check what ongoing support they offer to guard against skills fade. use to do so.

British Red Cross

Does it meet your first aid needs assessment for your workplace and individual learners' needs?

We already offer 70+ workplace first aid courses, which can be adapted and contextualised if needed e.g. with real-life examples from your industry, site or business. We also adapt how training is delivered to suit learning needs.

Do the EFAW, FAW and requalification courses meet the HSE's recommended topics and hours?

Yes. We cover all the recommended HSE topics and provide extra time for any additional topics.

How do they teach practical elements of the course?

All practical elements are taught face-to-face. This helps ensure correct techniques and helps learners feel confident and willing to act.

What resources do they use to deliver training?

We have an extensive range of training resources:

- Activity cards
- Learner packs
- Trainers notes
- Presentation packages
- Equipment e.g. AED training devices and CPR mannequins

What teaching methods do they use to enhance recall and retention and willingness to act?

We use a range of methods to help teach first aid. The approach has been tested and proven to be a highly effective way for people to learn first aid skills. It has some key characteristics:

1. Focus on the key intervention
2. Context that is relevant to the learner
3. Varied, interactive and learner-centered methodologies
4. Careful use of language and key phrases

What ongoing support do they offer?

Our Safe Hands online community offers free, ongoing support with first aid tips, key skills videos, real stories and monthly first aid updates. All learners can also email our team at any time with queries.

Valid certificate

Training organisations should only issue certificates to learners that they have assessed as competent. Learners must demonstrate satisfactory knowledge, skill and understanding in all aspects of the training course.

Certificates must state:

- the name of the training organisation
- the candidate's name
- the qualification title (eg FAW or EFAW)
- that the certificate has been issued for the purposes of the Health and Safety (first aid) Regulations (1981) and Health and Safety (first aid) (amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017
- that the certificate is valid for three years
- the commencement date
- that teaching was delivered in accordance with currently accepted first-aid practice
- an outline of the topics covered if the qualification is neither FAW nor EFAW, or an outline of any additional elements covered if applicable. This may be on the reverse of the certificate or as an appendix.

British Red Cross

Does the training provider only issue certificates to those deemed competent?

Yes, as a Voluntary Aid Society (VAS), the HSE acknowledges us in their Guidance as a standard-setter for currently accepted first aid practice.

We also produce the First Aid Manual along with the other Voluntary aid societies – this is currently the UK's only comprehensive guide to treating casualties in first aid emergencies.

Does the certificate contain everything the HSE requires?

N/A. Our syllabus follows currently accepted first aid practice.

How do they help you ensure that your first aiders' certificates remain valid?

Keeping your records up to date is easy with the Red Cross. If you have trained with us in the past we send you a reminder before your first aiders need to requalify.

Acceptable training and assessment qualifications

(Taken from s.14 and Table 2 of the GIE63)

Share on social



This is to certify that

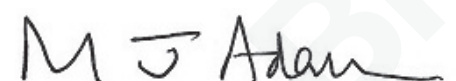
Jonathan Paul Wild

has successfully completed the course

First aid at work

with the British Red Cross

Training has been delivered in accordance with currently accepted first aid practice. Certificate issued for the purpose of the Health and Safety (first aid) Regulations (1981) and Health and Safety (first aid) (amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.



Mike Adamson
Chief Executive

Valid from:

22 Nov 2017

Valid to:

22 Nov 2020

Certificate No:

224323-FA3

Why choose the Red Cross?

The Red Cross has been delivering first aid at work courses for more than 30 years and has an enviable reputation for quality and excellence. We hold ISO:9001 2015 quality management accreditation, demonstrating the quality of service and training you can expect to receive when choosing the Red Cross.

We are committed to providing a quality learning experience above and beyond your expectations. This is how we manage to achieve a Net Promoter score of 9+ approximately 90% of the time and why we have such a high retention rate - with **86.7% of our learners from existing customer organisations**. We are the only UK training organisation to offer a unique, free online support programme after completion of your course to keep your first aiders updated, confident and willing to act.



Photo © /BRC.

Why choose British Red Cross Training?

From small businesses to multinational organisations, British Red Cross Training is the chosen first aid training provider for over 100,000 UK customers. As the standard setters for first aid training, we have over 35 years' experience of delivering vital training to help make workplaces of all sizes a safer place.

Our training courses help our wider work, with all operating surplus going into the British Red Cross' Charity Fund, helping us to create the greatest possible impact for people in crisis – whoever and wherever they are.

Train with a name you can trust.

Not sure what course you need?

Click the button below to try our first aid course finder.

[Find your course](#)