

# CPL+ Open Badge instructions

## 1.1 CPL+ Open Badge instructions



### Notes:

Hello, I'm Rob Stewart, a Learning and Development Adviser from the Scottish Social Services Council. This short video explains how the Continuous Professional Learning Plus Open Badges work. If this is your first time applying for a CPL+ badge, I recommend you watch this video all the way through. It contains important information to help you succeed in your application.

Now, you might be wondering, "Didn't these badges used to be called 'the learning challenge'?" Well, you're absolutely right, and if you're looking for those, you're in the right place. We've simply given them a new name, but their purpose remains the same.

So, let's dive in and explore what these CPL+ Open Badges are all about, how you can earn them, and why they're valuable for your professional development.

## 1.2 CPL+ Open Badge programme

### CPL+ Open Badge programme

**Take part and collect a brand-new badge every month.**

This is your opportunity to get Open Badge recognition for almost anything. Choose a topic, go off and learn about it and then explain how this learning will improve your practice.

**CPL+ benefits:**

- Provides Open Badge recognition for your CPL activity that you can share anywhere.
- Demonstrates your commitment to continuous and lifelong learning.
- Develops your reflective learning skills and can make you a better learner.
- Can support your career progression and professional goals.
- Builds a portfolio of assessed reflective accounts one step at a time.



### Notes:

The beauty of the CPL+ badges is that you can collect a brand-new badge every month. It's your opportunity to get Open Badge recognition for almost anything you're learning about in your professional life.

Unlike our other badges that focus on specific topics or resources, CPL+ gives you the freedom to choose. You pick a topic that interests you or relates to your work, go off and learn about it, and then explain how this learning will improve your practice. It's that simple.

No Open Badge is a mandatory part of your CPL requirements for registration with the SSSC. So, why should you consider earning these badges? Well, there are several benefits:

They provide recognition for your CPL activity that you can share anywhere. It's a great way to showcase your ongoing learning. They also demonstrate your commitment to continuous and lifelong learning, which is crucial in our ever-evolving field.

By participating, you'll develop your reflective learning skills, making you a better learner overall. This can really support your career progression and professional goals, giving you tangible evidence of your dedication to improvement.

And don't forget, you're building a portfolio of assessed reflective accounts, one step at a time. This can be invaluable for your professional development.

Remember, the choice of what to learn is yours. This flexibility allows you to tailor your learning to your specific needs and interests. So, why not give it a go? If you find it isn't for you, that's perfectly okay.

### 1.3 Collect a new badge each month

#### Collect a new badge each month

- Apply for a CPL+ badge whenever you like.
- A new CPL+ badge is released every month.
- You are under no obligation to apply.
- The learning you are claiming the badge for must be recent (within 30 days).
- You cannot apply if you used a learning resource already covered by another badge.
- You cannot claim the badge for learning that was part of a formal qualification.

**Please note:** You can't apply for a CPL+ badge for a month in the past.



#### Notes:

Now, let's talk about how you can collect these CPL+ badges. As you can see, there's a new badge released every month, like this September 2024 one here. But don't worry, you're not under any obligation to apply for a badge every single month. You can apply for a CPL+ badge whenever you like, fitting it around your own schedule and learning needs.

There are a few important points to keep in mind though. First off, the learning you're claiming the badge for must be recent - within the last 30 days. We want to focus on the learning you're doing now, not something from ages ago.

You can't apply if you've used a learning resource that's already covered by another badge. Even if you haven't applied for that specific badge yet, you should go for that one instead of a CPL+ badge. This helps us avoid any double-counting of your learning.

Also, you can't claim the badge for learning that was part of a formal qualification. The idea here is that you're already getting recognition for that

through the qualification itself. Our CPL+ badges are all about recognising the learning that might otherwise go unnoticed.

One last thing to note: you can't apply for a CPL+ badge for a month in the past. So if you missed August 2024, for example, don't worry about it. Just focus on your current learning and the badge for this month. If you have your application returned to you for further work and the month ends before you can resubmit, then you can submit for the latest badge using the same evidence.

Remember, these badges are here to support your ongoing professional development, not to add pressure. Use them in a way that works best for you and your learning journey.

## 1.4 How to choose a topic

### How to choose a topic



You can choose any topic you want to, but it must be something that will help improve your practice as a social service worker.

When choosing a topic you should consider:

- learning objectives you've planned
- discussions you've had with your manager
- your strengths and weaknesses
- your latest SSSC MyLearning logs
- recommendations from the latest Care Inspectorate inspection for your service.



### Notes:

Choosing a topic for your CPL+ badge is quite flexible. You can pick any topic you want, but it should be something that will help improve your practice as a social service worker.

When deciding on a topic, consider a few things:

Think about learning objectives you've planned for the year ahead. Maybe there's something you and your manager have discussed in supervision.

Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses - is there an area you want to develop or a strength you want to build on?


Your latest SSSC MyLearning logs might give you some ideas. And don't forget to check recommendations from your latest Care Inspectorate inspection - there might be some valuable learning opportunities there and it can be very easy to explain how learning along those lines will make a real-world difference.

Remember, the goal is to choose something that's relevant and beneficial to your professional growth. So take a moment to think about what would really make a difference in your practice and improve outcomes for the people who rely on you.

## 1.5 Sources of learning

### Sources of learning

Suggestions for learning sources		
• Books	• Conferences	• Websites
• Documentaries	• Webinars	• Reports
• Courses	• Policies	• Shadowing
• Lectures	• Articles	• Feedback
• Blogs	• Podcasts	• Seminars
• Videos	• Online learning	• Role play
• Simulations	• Journals	• Group discussions



### Notes:

Once you've decided on your topic, it's time to dive into the learning. Now, you might be wondering, "Where do I start?" Well, the good news is, you've got plenty of options.

On this slide, you'll see a list of suggested learning sources. We've got everything from books and documentaries to conferences and webinars. You could be watching videos, listening to podcasts, or even shadowing a colleague. The list goes on - seminars, role play, group discussions - there's

something for everyone.

But here's the thing: this list isn't exhaustive. It's really up to you to choose what works best for your chosen topic and your personal preferences. The important thing is that whatever source you choose, it should provide good quality, reliable information.

One crucial tip: keep a note of the sources you use. You'll need to list these in your badge application. It doesn't matter if you've used one source or several, just make sure you can recall where you got your information from.

Remember, the focus here is on quality learning that's relevant to your practice. So whether you're reading a book or attending a conference, make sure it's contributing to your understanding of the topic you've chosen.

## 1.6 Applying for the badge (your evidence)

### Applying for the badge (your evidence)

You can submit written evidence when applying for the badge or provide a link to an audio or video recording.

- Put your registration number and name of employer at the top of your evidence.
- Carefully answer each of the five questions asked by the CPL+ badge criteria.
- Use these questions as headings within your evidence submission.
- Minimum (450) and maximum (900) word counts apply to these badges.



### Notes:

Now, let's talk about applying for the badge and submitting your evidence. You've got a couple of options here - you can either submit written evidence or provide a link to an audio or video recording. Whatever works best for you.

There are a few key things to remember when putting together your evidence:

First, make sure to put your registration number and the name of your employer right at the top of your evidence. We need this to confirm that you are eligible for the badge and your application will be returned to you without it.

Next, you'll need to carefully answer each of the five questions asked by the CPL+ badge criteria. Here's a tip that'll save you some hassle: use these questions as headings within your evidence submission. Our assessors look for these headings, and if they're not there, we might have to return your application. We want to be certain where each question is being answered.

Now, don't worry if this seems a bit daunting at first. I can assure you that after a few applications, you'll get into the swing of things. It becomes second nature pretty quickly.

One last thing to keep in mind: there's a minimum word count of 450 and a maximum of 900 words for these badges. This gives you plenty of room to demonstrate your learning without going overboard.

Remember, the goal here is to showcase your learning and how you're applying it to your practice. So, take your time to reflect on what you've learned before starting to write or record your application.

## 1.7 What is your topic and source?

### What is your topic and source?

**Q1: Tell us about the topic and learning activity you have chosen.**

25 words minimum, 50 words maximum.

- Be specific about the topic you focused on.
- Describe the format of your learning (e.g. workshop, online course, book, webinar etc).
- Mention any resources or materials you used during this learning activity.



### Notes:

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Alright, let's dive into the specific questions you'll need to answer when applying for your CPL+ badge. Over the next few slides, we'll go through each of these questions in detail, starting with "Tell us about the topic and learning activity you have chosen."

This question is all about setting the scene for your learning. You've got between 25 and 50 words to work with here, so make them count.

First off, be specific about your topic. Don't just say "dementia" for example - tell us what aspect of dementia you focused on. Maybe it was "communication strategies for people with dementia" or "supporting families of individuals with dementia".

Next, describe the format of your learning. Was it a workshop, an online course, a book you read, or maybe a webinar you attended? Be clear about this.

Finally, mention the resources or materials you used. This is where you should include details about who created the learning resource. If it was a book, who was the author and publisher? For an online course, who provided it?

Remember, the more specific you can be here, the better. It shows how you've engaged with your chosen topic and gives us a clear picture of what the rest of your evidence will be about.

## 1.8 Why is this relevant?

### Why is this relevant?

**Q2: Explain why this learning activity is relevant to your professional development.**

50 words minimum, 100 words maximum.

- Connect the learning to your current role or future career aspirations.
- Consider how this learning addresses any gaps in your knowledge or skills.
- Reflect on how this learning aligns with the needs of the individuals you support or your service area.





**Notes:**

Moving on to our second question: "Explain why this learning activity is relevant to your professional development." This is where you really get to show the value of your chosen topic.

You've got between 50 and 100 words for this one, so you'll need to be concise but insightful. The key here is to demonstrate why this learning matters - not just for ticking boxes, but for making a real difference in your practice and for the people you support.

You will see three bullet points on this slide. These are just examples of what you might talk about. You don't need to cover all three - focus on what's most important for your specific topic and learning activity.

You might connect the learning to your current role or future career aspirations. Or perhaps you'll consider how this learning addresses gaps in your knowledge or skills. Another angle could be reflecting on how this aligns with the needs of the individuals you support or your service area.

The crucial thing here is to show insight. We want to see that you've thought about the impact of this learning.

Remember, we're looking for quality over quantity. A well-thought-out response that clearly shows the relevance of your learning will be much more effective than trying to cram in every possible angle. So, take a moment to reflect on why you chose this topic.

## 1.9 What did you learn?

### What did you learn?

**Q3: Tell us about three things you learned and why each of these is important to (a) you and (b) the people who use your service.**

150 words minimum, 300 words maximum.

- Be specific about each learning point, avoiding vague statements.
- For each point, explain its relevance to your professional practice.
- Describe how each learning point can directly benefit the individuals you support or improve your service delivery.
- Consider both immediate and long-term impacts of applying this learning.



### Notes:

Now we come to the heart of your evidence: "Tell us about three things you learned and why each of these is important to you and the people who use your service."

You've got more space here - between 150 and 300 words. This is where you really showcase your learning.

For each of your three points, be specific. Avoid vague statements. Explain how each is relevant to your professional practice, and how each is important to the individuals you support. Think about both immediate and long-term impacts.

Remember, we're looking for quality reflection here. Don't just list facts you've memorised. Instead, show why this new knowledge is important. That's what makes for compelling evidence.

## 1.10 How will you improve your performance?

### How will you improve your performance?

**Q4: Explain how you will apply what you've learned to improve the quality of care or support you provide in your day-to-day work.**

150 words minimum, 300 words maximum.

- Provide concrete examples of how you'll implement your learning in your role.
- Describe any changes you plan to make in your approaches or practices.
- Explain how these changes will lead to better outcomes for the people you support or improve your practice.
- Consider potential challenges in applying your learning and how you'll address them.



#### Notes:

Now we come to what I consider the most important question: "Explain how you will apply what you've learned to improve the quality of care or support you provide in your day-to-day work."

This is where your learning really comes to life. You've got 150 to 300 words to show how your new knowledge will make a tangible difference in your practice.

The assessor will be looking for clear evidence that you've properly identified improvements or changes to your own practice. Or perhaps there are things you already do that you now realise you should be doing more of. This is about your future practice and how it will benefit those you support.

We're looking for concrete examples here. How will you implement this learning in your role? What specific changes do you plan to make in your approaches or practices?

It's crucial to explain how these changes will lead to better outcomes for the people you support or improve your practice. Be as specific as you can.

One important note: Please don't give examples like "I work with a client and once xyz happened." Your application will be returned if you do this. We need to be sure you're focused on future practice that will have benefits beyond isolated examples.

Don't forget to consider potential challenges you might face when applying your learning. How will you address these? This shows you've thought critically about implementation.

Remember, this question is all about turning your learning into action. It's not just about what you know, but how you'll use that knowledge to make a real difference in your work. This is your chance to show the practical impact of your learning.

## 1.11 How has this increased your confidence?

### How has this increased your confidence?

**Q5: Reflect on how this learning experience has increased your confidence.**

75 words minimum, 150 words maximum.

- Describe how this learning has enhanced your understanding of the topic in relation to your role.
- Explain how this new knowledge or skill makes you feel more prepared for your responsibilities.
- Reflect on any aspects of your work that you now feel more capable of handling.
- Consider how this increased confidence might positively impact your interactions with colleagues and service users.



### Notes:

We're now at our final question, and it's another important one: "Reflect on how this learning experience has increased your confidence".

You've got between 75 and 150 words to explore this. Now, don't feel pressured to address every single bullet point you see on the screen. These are just examples to get you thinking. Choose the aspects that resonate most with your experience.

You might describe how this learning has enhanced your understanding of the topic in relation to your role. Or perhaps you want to explain how this new knowledge makes you feel more prepared for your responsibilities.

You could reflect on aspects of your work that you now feel more capable of

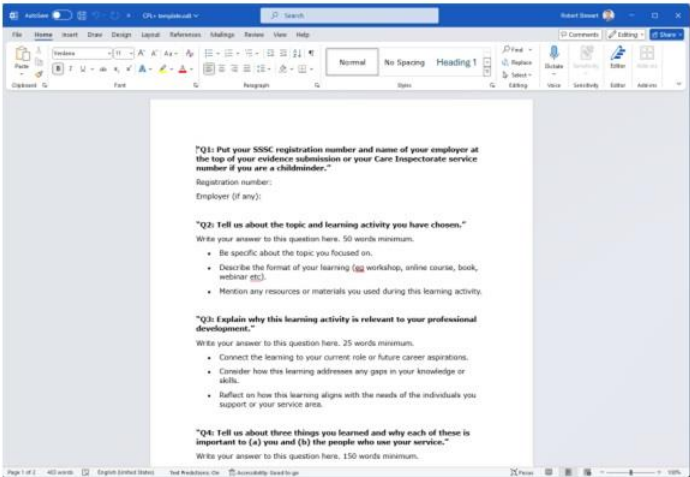
handling. Another angle might be considering how this increased confidence might positively impact your interactions with colleagues and people who use your service.

The key here is to be honest and specific about how this learning has boosted your confidence. Remember, increased confidence often leads to better performance, so don't be shy about sharing how you've grown.

As with all these questions, focus on quality rather than trying to cram in every possible point. Choose the aspects that best reflect your personal growth from this learning experience.

## 1.12 Download the template to help you prepare

**Download the template to help you prepare**



**Q1: Put your SSSC registration number and name of your employer at the top of your evidence submission or your Care Inspectorate service number if you are a childminder.**  
Registration number:  
Employer (if any):


**Q2: Tell us about the topic and learning activity you have chosen.**  
Write your answer to this question here. 50 words minimum.

- Be specific about the topic you focused on.
- Describe the format of your learning (eg workshop, online course, book, webinar etc).
- Mention any resources or materials you used during this learning activity.

**Q3: Explain why this learning activity is relevant to your professional development.**  
Write your answer to this question here. 25 words minimum.

- Connect the learning to your current role or future career aspirations.
- Consider how this learning addresses any gaps in your knowledge or skills.
- Reflect on how this learning aligns with the needs of the individuals you support or your service area.

**Q4: Tell us about three things you learned and why each of these is important to (a) you and (b) the people who use your service.**  
Write your answer to this question here. 150 words minimum.



### Notes:

To make things easier for you, we've created a downloadable template that includes all the questions we've just discussed, along with helpful points on how to answer them.

You can find the download link for this template under the criteria section of any CPL+ badge. It's designed to open in any word processor - whether you're using Microsoft Office, Google Docs, Apple Pages, or something else.

I'd strongly recommend keeping a copy of this template and using it to prepare your evidence. Even if you're planning to record your evidence as

audio or video, it's still a valuable reference tool to make sure you're covering all the necessary points.

## 1.13 Thank you



### Notes:

And there you have it! We've walked through everything you need to know about applying for CPL+ Open Badges. I want to thank you for taking the time to watch this video - I hope you've found it helpful.

Remember, these badges are a great way to showcase your ongoing learning and development. They're an opportunity to reflect on your practice and think about how you can apply new knowledge to improve the care and support you provide.

As you can see on the screen, we've provided contact details if you need any further information or support. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

I wish you the very best of luck with your applications. Remember, every badge you earn is evidence of your commitment to professional growth. So go ahead, choose a topic that interests you, and start your CPL+ journey.