



developing digital competences  
of care workers to improve  
the quality of life of older people

**Call for Open Pilot**

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## Call for Open Pilot

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The CARER+ Consortium, coordinated by IPERIA (France), is inviting organisations to **join an Open Pilot experience**. It is an open possibility for home care service providers or other organisations dealing with home care workers or older people to take part in a piloting experience of using the CARER+ methodology and learning materials.

Organisations joining the pilot will receive access to the key outputs of the project including the competence framework, learning resources, and other tools of the Virtual Learning Environment. Pilot organisations will also receive methodological support from the Consortium and will be invited to present their experience at the CARER+ final conference.

A Handbook of Piloting Procedures is available to provide practical guidance to the piloting exercise that can be used by staff and organisations. The Handbook introduces the pilot in the context of the project, describes the original piloting scenarios, and presents in details: the range of activities, the administrative procedures and the required templates.

If your organisation is interested in joining the Open Pilot experience, please contact Thomas Arbouet (thomas.arbouet@iperia.eu) project coordinator at IPERIA or Margit Kinyik (kinyik.margit@gmail.com) at Telecentre-Europe. For more information about the CARER+ project, the implementing partners and the ongoing pilot experience, please visit our website (<http://www.carerplus.eu>) or follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CarerPlusProject>).

The CARER+ Team



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## Background information

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### The project

CARER+ project was initiated in order to link together and improve those attempts that focus on the improving the ageing process of older people at home and in the community by using modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve the quality of their life. Though, today it is possible for almost everyone to receive the care they need at home, even if they suffer from multiple chronic illnesses, yet we find that frail older people still move to assisted living facilities or nursing homes. For many older people, this transition is driven by a lack of qualified caregivers, an absence of basic services such as transportation, no access to appropriate housing and loneliness.

The CARER+ project is based on the extensive international collaboration of organisations from Europe which redound with their knowledge in social services, ICT technologies, adult education, evaluation, as well as with their professional networks and practical field experiences.

The implementation of ICT tools into home care services is a core principle of the information society and ageing strategies of the European Commission. CARER+ project is supported by the European Commission and is for the purpose of research and not for profit. The project team has identified common and specific digital competences of care workers and care recipients, and designed learning architecture and resources beforehand.

### New skills and solutions

We aim to help care workers by defining the new skills of the care worker - skills that can give care workers a new and vital role as a 'Carer+'. Care workers have many challenges in their profession: little formal accreditation or recognition of prior experience, limited access to technology, lack of chances to continue studying, etc. All of these challenges need to be recognised and solutions found.

What if care givers had a better idea of how to solve their challenges? What if, through the use of today's technology, care workers had flexible options to continue their training, the possibility for their profession to be formally recognised, opportunities to connect with other care workers and more?

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## Benefits for care workers

Care workers in the CAREER+ project will have free access to modern ICT tools; they can freely attend the training and they can apply and try their new skills their home care practice. The first part of the project -the so-called pilot phase- requires carers to participate in a training of partly face-to-face learning partly distance learning. This training will develop the care worker's digital competencies and help establish new working practices. Care workers will then provide 6 months home care service to older people by using the device they received and give feedback on their experiences.

## Participation of care-workers

The participation in CAREER+ project is completely free. Participants are not and cannot be charged by any fee. In top of their trainings, carers are requested to take part in research activities by answering questionnaires and participating in group interviews related to their experiences of the trainings.

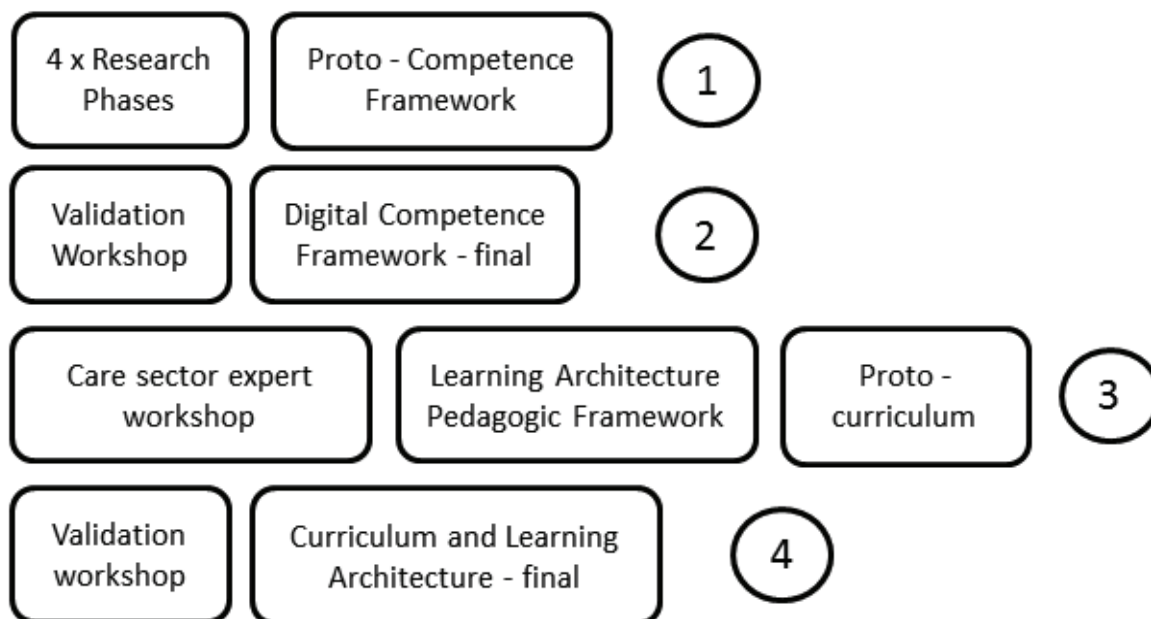
After the initial pilot phase carers will take part in the research phase. This will involve collecting information from carers by using individual or group interviews (focus groups) or filling out questionnaires. These research activities will help investigators of the project learn about the impacts and the effectiveness of the project and benefits that can possibly be provided to the care worker.

## Competence-based blended learning for carers

The CAREER+ training is based on a previous identification of digital competences and a scaffolding of the learning architecture and resources. The project partners have produced a Digital Competence Framework organised according to: 3 Competence Domains; 11 Competence Areas; 41 Competences and 2 Application Levels.

The foundational area of competences includes the common digital competences, the day-to-day area of competences contains the specific competences of care recipients and the vocational area of competences gathers the specific competences of care workers. You may see the framework [in a wiki published online here](#).

Utilising the Digital Competence Framework, King's College London and University of Macerata, Italy have designed and developed the learning pathways and related learning materials:



## The pilots

The project pilots implement and validate the learning architecture, pathways and resources produced. The piloting partners will carry out the training through specific ICT tools. The pilots will involve the two main publics of the project: care workers and care recipients. Organisations joining the open call will receive detailed information on the procedures and tools upon application. A Piloting Handbook was put in place for smooth support.

As part of the pilots, a blended (ICT supported learning mixed with face-to-face trainings) learning programme was developed. The programme comprises a total of five courses: two core compulsory courses that must be studied one after the other; followed by three electives in areas of professionalization and the provision of social care interventions. The programme is designed to work in a blended setting with all activities supported by a virtual learning environment and an online, social network community. Each of the individual courses is approximately 35 hours in total and designed to run over a period of eight weeks with short, small group, weekly face-to-face sessions with a mentor. Assessment is via portfolio submission and multiple choice questionnaire completion.

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### The five courses cover the following areas:

**Course 1:** This course covers foundational digital competence and is designed to lead the participants from a novice or beginner state to one where they are confident in both the use of mobile Internet devices, basic applications, security, privacy and digital content.

**Course 2** is the second core course and situates the care worker as a designer of care interventions to develop capability to build and test solutions to identified problems.

**Course 3** focuses on the professional development activity of the participants to enhance their competences in the areas of planning, reporting, communicating and networking and professional profile building.

**Course 4** focuses on promoting independent and assisted living. It is orientated towards designing and implementing social care interventions with ICT to support and promote independent living for care recipients

**Course 5** focuses on ensuring that participants will be able to design and implement ICT based interventions with care recipients.

### The equipment

The project identifies digital tablet as the more appropriate device to introduce new technology to seniors and care workers because of its easy use and its intuitive interface that people at every age can handle and especially older people suffering from disabilities. Besides as a light tool the tablet is adapted to frail people. Tablets equipped with a 3G connection also permit a wireless access to the Internet in every area developing a wireless broadband. Digital tablets are also a less intimidating tool than computers.

The applications available for tablets are numerous and are constantly expanding. They offer diverse services, which may be used to pursue CARER+ pilot's objectives including social integration, life improvement of both participants and professionalization of care workers. Through the Internet applications thus provide access to services like e-mail accounts, social networks, learning platforms or communication tools (Skype, chats, forums...).



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## The Virtual Learning Environment

The design of the learning programme is sensitive to the learner journey to ensure a coherent path from participant entry, study progress through to the exit. These three elements have been scaffolded by:

- An entry profiling tool to baseline participant skills and knowledge and to assess their readiness to study and attitudes to ICT use;
- Micro-certification delivered through a badging system that rewards skills acquisition and promotes positive learning behaviours and community activity in the VLE;
- A specific course on professionalization that supports personal development planning and enhancement of the individual's professional status and social capital.

Finally, an important element of sustainability has been built in to the programme through a 'train the trainers' pathway that offers advanced participants an opportunity to become mentors for the programme.

The participants will learn in the framework of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) consisting of three tools: a social network, a learning platform and a competency wiki. The social network will integrate or give access to the learning platform and the competency wiki. In each piloting country participants shall access these tools developed in their national language.

To learn more on the details of the programme, please, contact:

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