



THE COLLEGE OF
SOCIALWORK

The voice of social work in England

**Curriculum Guide
for The Care Act**

2015

WHY THIS CURRICULUM GUIDE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED SOCIAL WORKERS CAN ACT AS CHANGE AGENTS FOR A SOCIETAL MOVE TOWARDS PEOPLE HAVING GREATER CHOICE AND CONTROL OVER THEIR WELLBEING

This curriculum guide sets out how social workers at all levels, employers and commissioners of learning and development, and educators can prepare the social work workforce to use the Care Act well.

As the professional body for social work, the College of Social Work has produced this guide to provide a professional view of how social work practice needs to build on the strengths of personalised care, empowerment and support and, in some instances, to change in order to fulfil the potential and challenges of the Care Act.

Reflecting “the most significant reform in adult services in over 60 years” (Norman Lamb 14th May 2014) the Care Act builds on ongoing developments in adult social care away from paternalistic and managed care, towards empowerment, choice and control for adults and carers. The Care Act reflects two trends in social care: a new relationship between adults/ carers and practitioners based on values of empowerment and promoting independence; and good decision making based on sound professional judgement.

Social workers are integral to the successful implementation of the Care Act. Their values, knowledge and skills reflect what is needed for good practice under the Care Act. They are in a position to model good practice for others and act as mentors. In advanced and strategic roles, social workers, employers, commissioners and educators are able to create conditions and set standards for good practice. As a professional group, social workers can act as change agents for a societal move towards people having greater choice and control over their wellbeing. The Care Act reflects what adults and carers want from social care, and this guide helps to ensure that social workers respond.

Social workers work in diverse roles and settings, and interact with the Care Act in different ways. The Care Act principles and ways of working apply to all who work with adults. Since social work is a single profession, social workers working with children and their families also need to be aware of the Care Act.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

THE CURRICULUM COVERS THE MAIN AREAS OF PRACTICE THAT ARE REQUIRED FOR SOCIAL WORKERS TO IMPLEMENT THE CARE ACT WELL.

This curriculum guide sets out the College's professional view of:

- How social workers need to be prepared to practice under the Care Act (curriculum content)
- What this might look like at different levels of practice
- How the curriculum can be delivered and assessed
- Resources to support delivery of the curriculum.

The curriculum covers the main areas of practice that are required for social workers to implement the Care Act well. These are:

- Legal literacy and policy context
- Principles, values and rights
- Professionalism
- Professional judgement
- Knowledge and skills to support key areas of the Care Act.

This curriculum guide fits with a number of other documents:

- The Health and Care Professions Council standards for social workers
- The Professional Capabilities Framework owned by the College of Social Work
- The Care Act 2014
- The government's guidance for the Care Act
- Skills for Care training resources
- The Care Act capabilities produced by the College of Social Work
- The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
- The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Adults
- The College of Social Work's paper on Roles and Functions of Social Work

HOW THE CURRICULUM GUIDE CAN BE USED

The guide is written to be used by the following main groups:

By **individual social workers** to help meet their responsibility to undertake professional development

By **employers and commissioners** who may or may not be social workers, to help meet their responsibility to create the conditions for, and to support, good professional development

By **educators**, who may or may not be social workers, to help meet their responsibility to develop good practice.

Other social care staff, such as occupational therapists, social care workers and brokers, may also benefit from using the curriculum guide to consider how to develop their practice.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CARE ACT

The Care Act covers all social care practice with adults and carers at all stages of their journey through social care. It includes a significant shift towards wellbeing and prevention, personalised care and outcomes, rights and involvement, equity and quality of adult social care, and national consistency. It complements other law and guidance, in particular the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The Care Act requires consideration of boundaries between adult social care and other services, and joint working to implement.

[The Care Act guidance](#) highlights the importance of social workers in the following areas:

- Prevention
- Providing information and advice
- Market shaping and monitoring
- Assessment
- First contact
- Working with people who may not have capacity
- Financial assessment
- Care and support planning
- Advice and advocacy
- Reviews
- Safeguarding
- Transition
- Debt recovery
- Mediation.

It also states that social work is a service in its own right. This curriculum guide helps you to think through the most significant changes in practice for social workers.



CARE ACT GUIDE
02. CURRICULUM CONTENT

CURRICULUM CONTENT

THE CURRICULUM CONTENT COVERS THE MAIN AREAS OF PRACTICE THAT ARE REQUIRED FOR SOCIAL WORKERS TO IMPLEMENT THE CARE ACT WELL.

The areas are drawn from the Care Act. They start with the more general and go to the more specific:

Legal literacy and policy context sets out the understanding that social workers must have of the law and policy context; this links to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) domains of Knowledge and Contexts and organisations

Principles, values and rights sets out the principles that underpin the Care Act and the change in relationship that is required between social workers and adults/ carers; this links to the PCF domains of Ethics and values, Diversity and Rights, justice and economic wellbeing

Professionalism sets out the role of social workers in upholding standards of good practice to implement the Care Act; this links to the PCF domains of Professionalism and to Professional leadership

Professional judgement highlights the need for good professional judgement under the Care Act; this links to the PCF domain of Analysis and critical reflection

Knowledge and skills highlights the particular aspects of social work practice that will be developed and enhanced under the Care Act. These follow the sections of the Care Act guidance and are:

- Wellbeing and prevention
- Information and advice
- Assessment and eligibility
- Carers' rights
- Advocacy
- Financial literacy
- Person-centred care and support
- Safeguarding and risk
- Integration
- Transition

This links to the PCF domains of Knowledge and Skills and interventions.

LEGAL LITERACY AND POLICY CONTENT

As the Care Act is implemented, new learning needs will come to light. This framework will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

The Care Act builds on practice embedded within the personalisation agenda. Social workers and commissioners need to consider the impact of demographic and social changes on health and welfare provision. The policy context also needs to be understood within wider political ideology and context.

Legal literacy and policy context should include an overall understanding of the Care Act 2014 and its subsequent practice guidance. This should incorporate an understanding of developments in the integration of services and amalgamation of health and social care provision.

- [Making Safeguarding Personal \(2014\)](#)
- [Caring for our future: reforming care and support \(2012\)](#)
- [Building the National Care Service \(2010\)](#)
- [Shaping the future of care together \(2009\)](#)
- [Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care \(2007\)](#)
- [Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services \(2006\)](#)

Legal literacy must also include an understanding of wider legislation and its impact on practice including the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, and the Mental Health Act 2007.

Legal literacy is about how social workers are able to apply their knowledge of law. This includes an overall understanding of legal principles, powers and duties. It also needs to include skills in the area of understanding the role and context of the courts (including Coroner's court and the Court of Protection).

Associated skills include: recording; report writing; making evidenced-based decisions; and skills when presenting evidence in court.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR EDUCATORS



PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND RIGHTS

THE CARE ACT PRINCIPLES EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF STARTING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL, NOT MAKING ASSUMPTIONS, AND SUPPORTING CHOICE AND CONTROL.

In practice social workers are required to show respect and understanding of individuality, including giving due regard and support for the development of sexuality, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability and disability.

They need to understand the impact of life stages and show respect and appreciation of generational expectations of welfare provision. They also need to take a whole family approach in considering someone's psycho-social needs.

The Care Act also emphasises the need to balance needs and to promote positive risk taking to meet outcomes. Social workers at all levels need to develop an understanding of professional values and judgements and the ability to respond to dilemmas. The Care Act may require them to balance social work aims and values, including the concept of social justice, against the challenges of changes within welfare provision.

Within the Act there is a need to take a community and/or user-led approach to work. Historically welfare provision has resulted in social workers (and other professionals) being seen as the expert. However, the Care Act places the service user and carer as the expert, with the social worker in an enabling role. For social workers this means adopting a whole-person approach, supporting adults to make decisions based on their perception of need, and valuing and respecting individual choice.

The Act requires social workers to:

- support adults to make informed choices and empower adults to make decisions for themselves
- have a commitment to working collaboratively with families and communities
- enable risk taking for positive outcomes
- have an understanding of person centred work and a commitment to the concept of personalisation
- embody an asset and strengths based approach to assessment.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR EDUCATORS



PROFESSIONALISM

THE ACT REQUIRES THAT SOCIAL WORKERS DEMONSTRATE PROFESSIONALISM IN ALL ASPECTS OF WORK WITH ADULTS, CARERS AND THEIR SUPPORT NETWORKS.

Within the context of being professional social workers must be legally literate, act lawfully, support others to act lawfully, know when to seek legal advice, and know when and how to raise concerns about how the law is used.

As well as their professional responsibility to act lawfully and uphold professional standards, social workers have a role as mentors and leaders in developing excellence in practice. Social workers may be in a range of roles and settings, working with other agencies and mediating between different groups. They must act as role models. Some find themselves in roles where they have to assure quality, lead or direct the work of others.

Social workers have to balance their professional practice and values whilst managing the needs of their organisations, and the rights and needs of adults and carers. This requires social workers to develop skills in ethical reasoning and in managing ethical dilemmas.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR EDUCATORS



PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

SOUND JUDGEMENT IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM. IT INVOLVES THE USE OF ANALYSIS, INTUITION AND CRITICAL REFLECTION, ALONGSIDE SOUND INFORMATION, TO MAKE DEFENSIBLE DECISIONS.

Under the Care Act, social workers need to make judgements at key moments in an adult's or carer's journey through social care.

This requires sophisticated skills that support clear recording, analysis, reasoning, decision making and planning. They must adopt a critical and creative approach to assessment and to decision-making about need, risk, outcomes, eligibility and care and support.

Social workers have a key role in enabling and supporting adults and carers to lead or undertake their own assessments, and to determine and direct their own care and support. They should also be able to judge when and why a person may require advocacy within the assessment process in order to understand it.

Social workers need to understand when to use discretion and how to address complexity, challenge, power and oppression. They take a lead role in judgements about capacity and best interests.

Social workers should use research and other evidence to inform judgements. They need to understand and analyse the impact of context on people's needs and outcomes. They should adopt a critical and evidence-informed approach, and demonstrate clear, justified and defensible decisions. To support this, social workers use and understand theoretical models and learning from a range of disciplines.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS
CONSIDERATIONS FOR EDUCATORS



KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The following tables set out the main considerations for social workers, employers and commissioners, and educators that arise from the changes in the Care Act.

These provide an overview of the areas that are most likely to need development.

More detailed information about all the capabilities needed for social workers at different levels can be found in the College of Social Work's Capabilities framework for the Care Act.

Considerations for social workers	
Wellbeing and prevention	<p>Understanding what is meant by wellbeing.</p> <p>Supporting adults to determine what they consider might improve their wellbeing and ways in which they can take positive action themselves.</p> <p>Determining and supporting support systems, this can be within the family or wider community.</p> <p>Supporting adults to access support located within communities, adopting a range of creative ways to do this.</p> <p>Embracing and advocating the impact of early intervention and prevention in reducing levels of needs.</p> <p>Understanding need in relation to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, balancing this against eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Working directly with service users to reduce needs and risks and secondary levels of intervention.</p> <p>Specific considerations for those in managerial/leadership/strategic roles:</p> <p>Locating the concept of well being within the context of matching needs and service audits and of Local Authority planning.</p>
Information and advice	<p>Knowing your community to enable adults and carers to access support.</p> <p>Awareness of local and national services.</p> <p>Providing information about early intervention services.</p> <p>Providing information and advice, and advocacy and complaints.</p> <p>Understanding and developing information, developing local knowledge, community connecting.</p> <p>Specific considerations for those in managerial/leadership/strategic roles:</p> <p>Developing systems and ways of offering advice and guidance.</p>
Assessment and eligibility	<p>Adopting a critical and creative approach to assessments and decisions.</p> <p>Taking an asset-based approach to assessment, looking at informal and community networks. Promoting the expertise of adults and carers, promoting an inclusive approach to assessment to include self-funders.</p> <p>Enabling and supporting adults to lead or undertake their own assessments, and to determine and direct their own services.</p> <p>Working with adults to develop resilience and ways of coping.</p> <p>Understanding the impact of the life course.</p>

Considerations for social workers

Assessment and eligibility

Understanding what informs judgements about the extent to which a person can contribute to an assessment, planning and review process.

Understanding and assessing capacity to make decisions.

Making judgements about what an adult indicates is important to them and balancing this with risk and safeguards. This may involve assessment of capacity.

Understanding and determining needs based on capability and choice.

Exercising and being explicit about judgements made relating to eligibility criteria. Being clear about decisionmaking processes. Offering a clear and detailed analysis that is defensible. Managing and monitoring commissioned services and their compliance with safeguarding principles.

Making judgements about interruptions in services when outcomes are not being met or when needs have changed.

Specific considerations for those in managerial/leadership/strategic roles:

Enabling a critical approach to practice that includes a shift in paradigm from care and control to empowerment and independence.

Being clear about changes in current practice and ways of working. Giving due regard to the impact of political agendas.

Having clear criteria that outlines the capability of services and providers to deliver. Developing local strategies based on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

Employing strategies to ensure co-production with key stakeholders.

Carers' rights

Understanding the changes to carers' entitlements.

Recognising and promoting the assessment of and support for carers.

Balancing carers' needs with the needs of the cared-for person.

Ensuring judgements about eligibility are carer-blind.

Advocacy

Promoting the concept of advocacy and empowerment. Being able to form a judgement about when a person may not be in a position to advocate or contribute to this process.

Meeting the Local Authority's duty to provide independent advocates. Awareness of situations and judgements that might lead to an independent advocate being appointed.

Ensuring professional judgements take account of rights to advocacy.

Financial literacy

Developing knowledge of new funding arrangements, deferred payments and providing subsequent appropriate support to self-funders.

Developing knowledge and giving information to adults and carers about the charging of services, procedures and thresholds.

Understanding changes to the market for social care and its impact on adults.

Understanding and developing ways of supporting adults to purchase services and control their own budgets.

Supporting adults and carers to exercise choice, manage personal budgets and direct payments.

Understanding the process of deferred payment agreements.

Understanding the impact of welfare reforms on people's finances.

Considerations for social workers

Person-centred care and support

Promoting and undertaking direct work with adults and carers to ensure that they remain central and in control of their own assessment. Adopting strategies to ensure co-production and asset-based assessment.

Developing skills in direct work with adults and with children.

Being creative in meeting the needs of adults or children who may be deaf blind to ensure they remain central and in control of their own assessment.

Understanding the impact of the Care Act on existing levels of intervention and need, and promoting new ways of working and undertaking reassessments.

Developing skills in information sharing, advocacy and empowerment to facilitate choice, control and self-directed support.

Understanding and promoting the notion of choice and control in setting up personal budgets and direct payments.

Adopting and developing 'SMART' plans and ways of working to achieve personalised outcomes.

Specific considerations for those in managerial/leadership/strategic roles:

Developing knowledge of person-centred tools to aid this process, recognising support networks and involving carers.

Safeguarding and risk

Understanding risk thresholds and safeguarding as they relate to adults. Balancing the needs of adults, capacity, positive risk taking and the need for intervention to protect.

Ensuring that changes to services take account of risk as well as needs. Balancing needs and cost, ensuring that risk is not exacerbated during times of austerity.

Understanding the impact of health and ill-health and its relationship to risk.

Making safeguarding personal by starting with the outcomes that an adult wants to achieve, and fully involving them and those important to them in safeguarding.

Using evidence-informed, personalised approaches to safeguarding.

Understanding threshold criteria and ensuring adults remain central when there are safeguarding concerns. This includes undertaking enquiries when there is reason to suspect an adult may be at risk of abuse, neglect or harm and adopting the six key principles underpinning all safeguarding work: empowerment; prevention; proportionality; protection; partnership; and accountability.

Developing ways of working to reduce risk, support adults and their families to manage, and monitor safeguarding concerns.

Exercising judgement about whether to appoint an advocate to support a vulnerable person and ensuring that the principles outlined in the Care Act are followed in this respect.

Understanding the role and function of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Locating the work of the SAB in the context of multi agency working.

Specific considerations for those in managerial/leadership/strategic roles:

Developing skills and expertise to contribute to the work of the SAB.

Integration

Develop skills in multi-disciplinary and multi-agency communication and working.

Understanding the professional role and remit of staff in a range of services.

Understanding the context and input from integrated services and how they impact on outcomes for service users for example end of life care.

Considerations for social workers

Transitions

Developing similar skills to those outlined in the above section relating to assessment.

Understanding the process of transitions and when to undertake an assessment.

Understanding the interface between adult services and children's services and the importance of assessment and eligibility during transition.

Developing skills in direct work with children.

Understanding the role of children as carers.

Developing an understanding and awareness of how to interpret differences in eligibility criteria between children's and adults' services.

Developing ways to provide age-appropriate information and guidance.

Specific considerations for those in managerial/leadership/strategic roles:

Develop mechanisms to support multi-disciplinary working and information sharing.

Considerations for commissioners	
Wellbeing and prevention	<p>Developing ways to determine needs and services.</p> <p>Supporting and promoting change on a local level.</p> <p>Aligning services within a multi-disciplinary context, understanding staffing needs to meet demand.</p>
Information and advice	<p>See above example.</p>
Assessment and eligibility	<p>Driving the pace of change for the market.</p> <p>Developing systems to understand local need.</p> <p>Setting up systems to procure, commission, monitor and quality assure services. This should be done alongside service users and carers.</p> <p>Understanding what good personalised care looks like.</p> <p>Setting standards to ensure excellence in provision and service.</p>
Carers' rights	<p>Promoting the role and rights of carers.</p> <p>Developing services and systems to meet the needs of carers.</p>
Advocacy	<p>Supporting, developing and in some instances commissioning advocacy services.</p> <p>Ensuring quality of provision, including advocates being of good character and integrity and ensuring appropriate training is provided.</p>
Financial literacy	<p>Developing systems and services that are sustainable.</p> <p>Developing systems to manage poor practice or provider failure or service interruptions.</p> <p>Developing systems to share information to adults and carers about finances, including charging for services.</p> <p>Understanding and finding ways to manage the process of, and impact of, a Local Authority delegating its functions.</p> <p>Developing systems for procurement of services.</p> <p>Developing systems to manage, monitor and quality assure services.</p>
Person-centred care and support	<p>Developing ways of monitoring and ensuring users are involved in all aspects of service design and delivery.</p>
Safeguarding and risk	<p>Developing a culture where safeguarding adults remains central to assessment and delivery of all services whether provided by the Local Authority or employing agency, or via a service purchased or commissioned.</p> <p>Developing an understanding of safeguarding adults reviews (including a systems approach).</p> <p>Developing skills in using the findings from Serious Case Reviews (they won't be called these much longer) to learn and to change practice.</p>
Integration	<p>Developing a culture where safeguarding adults remains central to assessment and delivery of all services whether provided by the Local Authority or employing agency, or via a service purchased or commissioned.</p> <p>Developing an understanding of safeguarding adults reviews (including a systems approach).</p> <p>Developing skills in using the findings from Serious Case Reviews (they won't be called these much longer) to learn and to change practice.</p>
Transitions	<p>Developing ways of ensuring multi-disciplinary working and information sharing.</p> <p>Ensuring co-production and integration is central to all services.</p>

Considerations for educators

Wellbeing and prevention	<p>Qualifying social work curriculum could offer for example, a focus within a unit on empowerment, prevention and community based social work.</p> <p>Blended learning could include practice scenarios aligned to Department of Health Care Act factsheets.</p> <p>Action learning sets could explore community based support in a given area.</p>
Information and advice	See above example.
Assessment and eligibility	<p>Links can be made with local practitioners and services. Developing an understanding of localised agreements relating to eligibility criteria and assessment of need and risk. Use of local tools to assess need and risk.</p> <p>Supporting students and practitioners to develop skills in independent thinking, complexity and challenge.</p> <p>Enhancing skills in the area of analysis, recording, decision making and planning.</p> <p>Supporting students and practitioners to use tools to support and enhance practice, for example, decision making trees.</p>
Carers' rights	Supporting students and practitioners to understand the needs of carers and their right to be assessed.
Advocacy	A further example could include the development of skills in the area of advocacy. Supporting students and practitioners to help adults and carers advocate and seek support and services for themselves.
Financial literacy	<p>Qualifying students would benefit from understanding the economic context of the work.</p> <p>Considering how other agencies can support learning.</p> <p>Ensuring considerations of poverty and income are central to learning and development content.</p>
Person-centred care and support	The qualifying and post qualifying curriculum could, for example, pay attention to the complex knowledge and skills used in supporting decisions made about end of life care. This could include complex sensitive scenarios and role plays. Exercises to challenge values, ethics and diversity could be used.
Safeguarding and risk	<p>Developing and using practice links to understand thresholds relating to risk, procedures and processes, and ways to keep service users central to the safeguarding process.</p> <p>Involvement of key personnel from the SAB could be beneficial.</p>
Integration	<p>Understanding social work in a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary context.</p> <p>Encouraging multi-disciplinary teaching across the curriculum. For example end of life care could include input from end of life care specialists such as Macmillan and other clinical support staff.</p>
Transitions	<p>Emphasising that social work is a single profession.</p> <p>Identifying joint working and whole family approaches to learning and development across the life-course.</p> <p>Qualifying students would benefit from an understanding of the interface between adult and children's services and also of the role of children as carers.</p>



CARE ACT GUIDE
03. CURRICULUM DELIVERY

METHODS OF DELIVERY

DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED STAFF ACROSS A RANGE OF ORGANISATIONS.

This can include HEI's, practice educators, training organisations, trainers, supervisors etc.

Delivery can take many forms, ranging from more passive learning, such as presentations or e-learning, through face-to-face learning such as in workshops or action learning sets, and practice-based learning such as shadowing, mentoring or observations.

Methods should be based on evidence of successful learning and training transfer. They should take account of the level, learning style and practice needs of each individual or group.

There should be a cycle of continuous development including: identifying learning needs; meeting these; transferring learning into practice; and gathering evidence of practice improvement.

This should be linked to:

- registration and maintaining a continuous professional development record;
- use of the Professional Capabilities Framework;
- appraisal and review;
- and regular supervision.

There needs to be an emphasis on critical reflection and critical review of practice knowledge and skills, including through observation and third party feedback.

Rather than being prescriptive, this guide provides some outline suggestions for different groups below.

- Qualifying Students
- ASYE year
- Social Worker
- Experienced social worker
- Advanced social worker
- Strategic social worker.



CARE ACT GUIDE
04. RESOURCES

LAW AND REGULATION

[Care Act 2014](#)

[Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)

[Deprivation of Liberty: Standard Authorisations, Assessments and Ordinary Residence Regulations 2008](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Human Rights Act 1998](#)

[Children and Families Act 2014](#)

[Mental Health Act 2007](#)

POLICY AND GUIDELINES

[Care Act Guidance](#)

[Care Act Factsheets](#)

[Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice](#)

[Making Safeguarding Personal \(2014\)](#)

[Clinical governance and adult safeguarding: An integrated process \(2010\)](#)

[Caring for our future: reforming care and support \(2012\)](#)

[Building the National Care Service \(2010\)](#)

[Shaping the future of care together \(2009\)](#)

[Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care \(2007\)](#)

[Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services \(2006\)](#)

CARE ACT IMPLEMENTATION (GENERAL)

[Skills for Care training resources](#)

[Research in Practice for Adults resources](#)

[Social Care Institute for Excellence resources](#)

[Local Government Association \(2014\) Making Safeguarding Personal: A toolkit for responses, Third edition.](#)

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Pike, L., Indge, R., Leverton, C., Ford, D., & Gilbert, T. (2010). *Bridging the gap between learning and practice: From where we were to where we are now*. *The Journal of Adult Protection*, 12, 28–38.

Pinkney, L., Penhale, B., Manthorpe, J., Perkins, N., Reid, D., & Hussein, S. (2008).

Voices from the frontline: Social work practitioners' perceptions of multi-agency working in adult protection in England and Wales. *The Journal of Adult Protection*, 10, 12–24.

Tanner, D., Glasby, J., and McIver, S. (2014) *Understanding and Improving Older People's Experiences of Service Transitions: Implications for Social Work*, *British Journal of Social Work*, doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcu095

TEXT BOOKS

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Brammer AK and Brammer AK. 2012. Personalisation and the law. In Social Work with Adults. Davies MB (Ed.). Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Gardner, A (2014) Personalisation in Social Work (Transforming Social Work Practice Series) London:Sage.

Kemshall, H. and Wilkinson, B. (Eds) (2011) Good Practice in Assessing Risk. Current Knowledge, Issues and Approaches London:Jessica Kingsley Publishers

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Spencer Lane, T. (2014) Care Act Manual. Andover: Sweet and Maxwell.

MEDIA AND WEBSITES

[Department of Health](#)

[Office for Disability Issues](#)

[The College of Social Work](#)

[Research in Practice for Adults](#)

[Social Care Institute for Excellence](#)

[Skills for Care](#)

[Age UK](#)

[Carers UK](#)

[Carers Trust](#)

[Alzheimer's Society](#)

[Mind](#)

[Scope](#)

[National Autistic Society](#)

[RNIB](#)

[Action on Hearing Loss](#)

[Sense](#)



CARE ACT GUIDE
05 APPENDIX 01

DESCRIPTORS FOR LEVELS OF PRACTICE OF THE CARE ACT THESE DESCRIPTORS ARE BASED ON THE PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK DESCRIPTORS FOR THESE LEVELS.

COMPLETION OF QUALIFYING PROGRAMME

By completion of qualifying programmes, newly qualified social workers demonstrate the values that underpin the Care Act principles.

They demonstrate the knowledge and skills to apply the Care Act to work with a range of user groups.

They meet the requirements of the Care Act in some complex situations.

They take responsibility for following the Care Act whilst recognising that final judgements will still rest with their supervisor; and they seek appropriate support and supervision.

COMPLETION OF ASSESSED AND SUPPORTED YEAR IN EMPLOYMENT (ASYE)

By the end of the ASYE social workers have consistently demonstrated the values that underpin the Care Act principles.

They demonstrate the knowledge and skills to be effective in their interventions under the Care Act, and have built their own confidence and earned the confidence of others.

They have developed experience and skills in using the Care Act in a particular setting and with a particular user group, and to use it in more complex situations.

They seek support appropriately, while starting to exercise initiative and evaluate their own practice.

SOCIAL WORKER ROLE

In the Social Work role, social workers demonstrate the values that underpin the Care Act principles, and use their knowledge and skills to make higher quality judgements under the Care Act in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge.

Through growing understanding they expect and anticipate, but do not pre-judge, the legal issues that may develop.

They have greater confidence and independence (whilst accessing support when needed), and use their initiative to broaden their repertoire of responses.

They have expertise in using the Care Act in one or more areas of practice, are familiar with local resource networks to implement the Care Act, and are recognised by peers as a source of reliable legal knowledge and advice.

EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS

Experienced social workers are more autonomous in using the Care Act.

They demonstrate expert and effective use of the Care Act in complex situations, with higher levels of risk, striking a balance between competing principles and rights, and liaising with a range of professionals, including more senior levels.

They manage a range of complex situations, and offer expert legal opinion within the organisation and to others.

They support other agencies and share high quality information.

They model good, lawful practice, setting expectations for others.

They start to take responsibility and be accountable for the practice of others, mentoring newly qualified social workers, and supervising the work of junior staff.

They support individuals, families, communities, user groups and voluntary organisations to ensure the Care Act is implemented well, and contribute their views on implementation to managers and leaders.

ADVANCED SOCIAL WORKERS

At the advanced level, it is expected that all social workers will provide practice and/or professional leadership in using the Care Act, through the development of good practice, quality assurance, staff development, knowledge development or management, and will also help to influence and contribute to strategic implementation of the Care Act in the organisation.

Social Workers at this level make a difference either by using the Care Act directly with people in highly complex situations, or by supporting and/or developing staff to use it or knowledge about it, to provide better outcomes for people who use services, families, carers and communities.

Professional Social Work Educators: facilitate the learning and development of others to use the Care Act; support the transfer of learning in to practice; contribute to knowledge of good practice in using the Care Act; contribute to workforce development to ensure the Care Act is used well.

Advanced Social Work Practitioners: have their practice under the Care Act recognised as exemplary, and provide leadership and professional wisdom to their colleagues and other professionals for work in situations of high complexity; provide constructive challenge to enhance practice; contribute to the development of knowledge and promotion of excellence in using the Care Act; make use of sophisticated, critical reasoning and both model and facilitate reflective and evidence-informed practice.

Social Work Managers: lead, motivate, nurture and manage a team, ensuring the service provided is lawful, effective, and delivers positive outcomes; ensure that support and resources are in place to use the Care Act effectively; are accountable for their team's practice under the Care Act; support mentoring and coaching, and learning to enhance the quality of practice; help their team's learning to influence how the organisation and other services implement the Care Act.

STRATEGIC SOCIAL WORKER

Social workers at a strategic level work to ensure that organisations are aware of and respond to the views of people who use services, families and carers about the Care Act, as well as the political context within which it is implemented locally, regionally and nationally.

They take responsibility for supporting implementation through the Standards for Employers of Social Workers.

They manage and are accountable for using available resources effectively to ensure lawful practice.

Using a human rights and ethical framework, they support complex decision-making at a strategic level, balancing different interests.

They ensure that professional social work counsel and experience are available for all staff using the Care Act and inform decision-making at a strategic level, supporting the organisation to meet the expectations under the Care Act.

They aim to ensure that the Care Act promotes positive outcomes and experiences for people, families, carers, and communities.

They pro-actively seek feedback from a range of sources to inform strategic decision-making. They provide strategic leadership to ensure effective risks and interventions are joined up.

Strategic leaders work across organisations with partners, at local, regional and national levels seeking out best evidence-informed or emerging practice. They support the development of social work knowledge and skills, influencing the development of the profession's role under the Care Act.

They lead and initiate change within and across organisations to improve quality and outcomes.

STRATEGIC SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS

Strategic Social Work Educators take the responsibility for responding to professional development needs around the Care Act, liaising locally, regionally and nationally to seek out best practice.

They respond to learning needs that emerge from audit, analysis and incidents locally and nationally.

They are involved in and initiate research. They use evidence to implement the Care Act, and to ensure that a workforce and development strategy is in place to meet its requirements.

They measure the impact of the Care Act.

They put partnership arrangements in place to meet joint responsibilities.

PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKERS

Principal Social Workers take a professional lead across an organisation, and have a responsibility for supporting and advising on the quality of social work practice under the Care Act.

They provide professional leadership for the social work role; they draw on their professional experience to influence strategic decision-making across the organisation.

They use their knowledge and skills to inform the wider functions of the organisation that support the Care Act.

They take responsibility for the practice response to the Care Act. They develop professional networks locally, regionally and nationally to identify and influence practice improvements.

They ensure that the Care Act implementation takes account of professional social work strengths.

They develop and sustain partnership arrangements with stakeholders within and across organisations.

They promote and take part in developing the body of knowledge and research about social work under the Care Act, working in partnership to ensure that developments reflect the needs of front line practice.

STRATEGIC SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS

Strategic Social Work Managers are skilled managers and leaders.

They work with stakeholders, including service users, carers, families and communities to implement the Care Act.

They are responsible for ensuring social work practice and values deliver positive outcomes.

They promote local and national research and evaluation to influence and develop social work evidence-informed practice under the Care Act.

They lead, motivate and inspire social workers and others across organisations ensuring that practice is effective and responsive; they promote equalities, inclusion and diversity within the Care Act implementation; and support effective change.



CARE ACT GUIDE
06 APPENDIX 2

HOW THE CURRICULUM GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED

THE GUIDE BUILDS ON GUIDANCE AND SECTOR IMPROVEMENT WORK INCLUDING THE CARE ACT GUIDANCE

The Curriculum Guide was developed by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and Research in Practice for Adults (RiPfa). MMU has previously developed the curriculum guide for interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration. RiPfa has developed capability frameworks for local authorities.

The Guide builds on guidance and sector improvement work including the Care Act guidance, national guidance for implementation of the Care Act from Skills for Care and the College of Social Work (TCSW), and TCSW guidance on the roles and functions of social workers.

Social workers' views, and the views of adults and carers were incorporated through an advisory group that commented on the drafts of the Guide. Adults and carers views were also incorporated through the use of evidence from the Care Act consultation, through other research and evidence of service user and carer views, and through the inclusion of resources relating to service user and carer views.



CARE ACT GUIDE
07 FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

- i. [HCPC Standards](#) sets out the standards that social workers in England must meet to be registered. This curriculum guide reflects and builds on these standards.
- ii. This sets out the capabilities that social workers should have at different stages in their career. This guide links the knowledge and skills that are needed for the Care Act to the domains in the [PCE](#).
- iii. [The Care Act 2014](#) sets out what must and should be done in adult social care. This guide can be used to identify the curriculum to support delivery of the law. [Hyperlink to Care Act 2014](#).
- iv. [The Care Act Guidance](#) provides information on how the Care Act should be followed, including how social workers should be deployed. This guide can be used to identify the main areas of learning and development that social workers need in order to meet the requirements of the guidance.
- v. [Skills for Care training resources](#) support learning and development for social care staff implementing the Care Act. This guide can be used to identify which areas of learning are a priority for individuals and groups of staff so that the appropriate training can be delivered.
- vi. The [Professional Capabilities Framework](#) set out what social workers need to know and do in order to practice well under the Care Act. They complement the existing Professional Capabilities Framework for social workers. This guide can be used to identify the main areas of learning required. The capabilities then provide more detail about what social workers need to know and do.
- vii. [ASYE Skills for Care](#) provides newly qualified social workers with access to regular and focused support during their first year of employment. This guide can be used to identify the curriculum that will support social workers to develop in their first year. [Hyperlink to pages](#).
- viii. This sets out what social workers are expected to know and do once they have completed foundation learning and development. The KSS reflects the aims and principles of the Care Act and its areas of practice including: promoting wellbeing; achieving outcomes; taking a whole family approach; ensuring personalised and integrated care; promoting choice and control, ensuring advocacy; safeguarding; working in partnership; supporting transition. It states that 'the Care Act 2014 puts the professional practice of the individual social worker at the heart of adult social care, and signals a move away from care management as the overriding approach to working with adults' (page 8). This Curriculum Guide can be used alongside the KSS to identify the main learning and development that social workers need for the Care Act, as a subset of their overall capabilities. [Hyperlink to KSS](#).
- ix. This sets out the areas of practice in which social workers can particularly add value, and in which they should ordinarily be deployed. These areas are: responding to complex needs; effective safeguarding and risk management; addressing adversity and social exclusion; promoting independence and autonomy; prevention and early intervention. These reflect key areas of the Care Act and its guidance on where social workers should be used. This guide can be used to support learning and development for social workers to contribute in these key areas of practice. [Hyperlink to roles and functions document](#).
- x. In the first instance social workers should consider how their practice might be different under the Care Act. Many have embodied the practice and principles from the personalisation agenda and many hold strong values that service users are experts by experience. The Care Act strengthens this putting adults and carers at the heart of the assessment and of any interventions and services. Social workers are advised to undertake a skills audit to determine their core strengths and what level of learning and development needs they have (see Trevithick's lexicon of 80 skills and refer to the knowledge and skills statement (KSS) for adult services). Social workers could consider themes emerging from the Care Act, for example positive risk taking. This could be the focus of supervision to complement their continuing professional development.
 - Consider the curriculum and identify areas of learning needed
 - Use the College of Social Work's Capabilities framework for the Care Act to identify the specific capabilities to work on
 - Use the curriculum guide to identify the delivery method and resources to support development of the capabilities.
- xi. Employers and commissioners have a responsibility to support social workers to deliver excellent practice. They can build upon work that has been done to meet the Employers' Standards including supporting professional development, ensuring reflective supervision and supporting maintenance of registration. They also have an overall responsibility to ensure strategic development of the workforce, including social workers, to meet the Care Act requirements.
 - Consider the curriculum and review existing social work practice against this
 - Identify learning and development that is required, and refer to the College of Social Work's Capabilities framework for the Care Act to identify the specific capabilities to work on
 - Commission appropriate learning and development to meet the curriculum
 - Identify resources to support learning and development
 - Identify the impact of learning and development by reviewing practice against the curriculum areas. Educators support social workers to meet foundation requirements
- xii. as part of their training. Learning and development should be linked to the needs of employers in implementing the Care Act and to preparing social workers to meet agreed standards. Throughout social workers' careers, educators support them to develop and maintain capabilities needed in their roles using the Professional Capabilities Framework which this curriculum guide links to.
 - Consider the curriculum and review existing learning and development provision
 - Identify changes to learning and development that is required and refer to the College of Social Work's Capabilities framework for the Care Act to identify the specific capabilities to include
 - Deliver learning and development to meet the curriculum
 - Identify resources to support learning and development
 - Identify the impact of learning and development by reviewing learning outcomes against the curriculum areas.

FOOTNOTES

- xiii. Social workers are required to practice within a legal and policy context. The Care Act offers a comprehensive legislative framework for adults and carers. Social workers are required to make lawful judgements at key moments using the Act and guidance. A distinctive feature of the Care Act is the duty on Local Authorities to ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures and protocols are in place including a duty to undertake safeguarding enquiries. It is suggested that social workers give detailed consideration to their on going learning and development needs of the many new requirements within the Act and its guidance.
- xiv. Employers and commissioners need to ensure that social workers are equipped to act lawfully. They may also consider the additional requirement to have specific written protocols in place, including for example, Safeguarding Boards, Serious Case Reviews, information sharing. Specific issues may also include the inclusion of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working and work across multiple settings, including health and the independent and voluntary sector.
- xv. Educators are integral to ensuring social workers exit qualifying courses with a working knowledge of the law and policy as it relates to social work. At present courses are recommended to revisit their current curriculum and address the general features duties and powers within the Care Act. Attention could be paid to the context of eligibility criteria for services, the need to work preventatively and skills in ensuring that users remain central when there are safeguarding concerns. Students should be taught baseline skills in the area of applying threshold criteria and in assessing risk. Reference could be made to the subtle differences and nuances in use of the law in adult services to that of children's services. The interface between the two and the need for clear transition planning could be stressed. Attention should be paid to developing some baseline skills in practice in the area of recording, report writing, and presenting evidence orally and in writing. Educators will build on this foundation throughout social workers' careers.
- xvi. The Care Act advocates further development in the area of person-centred work and the concept of personalisation, therefore the nature of practice may not be significantly different for some social workers. For others the Act may signify a shift in an established way of working. Social workers might want to consider rights in the context of changing demographics, and the learning and development needs that arise from this for example in the area of palliative care, and end of life care and support.
- xvii. For employers and commissioners, consideration and thought might be given to supporting staff to develop new ways of thinking which help them balance the rights and diversity of adults and carers, and the complexities of organisations and changes in welfare provision. Clarity of legal mandate, interpretation of policy and translation into the workplace in the form of policies and procedures might help, and might be a useful basis to underpin any work commissioned or developed.
- xviii. Qualifying courses can build on established modules/ units addressing diversity, rights and justice in order to fully reflect the Care Act principles. Educators might consider developing work in the area of advocacy, the skills in advocating for others, and skills in recruiting and supporting advocates. Educators can support social workers to continuously develop their professional practice and to increasingly support others.
- xix. Social workers need to practice within their own limitations. Social workers are accountable for their own practice and for their own on-going development. This guide is aimed to help social workers think through what the Care Act might mean for them and what changes this might mean for their practice. It is intended to help social workers identify on going learning and development needs.
- xx. Employers should support social workers to meet their professional standards in order to remain registered, including through ensuring learning and development opportunities and supervision. Commissioners may be involved in commissioning a range of services, which might not exclusively relate to social work and social workers. The concept of professionalism should be embedded in all work in adult services. Commissioners might want to consider embedding this requirement in the procurement process and during interview and selection processes.
- xxi. Educators require students (qualifying and post qualifying) to demonstrate professionalism during the duration of their studies. They might want to consider outlining exactly what they require students to demonstrate and how they want them to do this, for example setting work which demonstrates ethical reasoning. Educators can support social workers to continue to meet continuous professional development requirements throughout their career using the Professional Capabilities Framework.
- xxii. Social workers must ensure the individual's views, wishes and feelings are included as part of their full participation in decision making, balancing this with the wellbeing of others. Social workers should demonstrate a good understanding of theory, research, evidence of service user and carer views, and their own and others' professional experience. They should develop professional judgement through opportunities to discuss, reflect on and test multiple hypotheses. They should be skilled in using analysis and intuition, and use critical reflection to address biases in decision making. Social workers continually develop their knowledge and skills to work in complexity and uncertainty. As social workers progress through the levels of the PCF consideration should then be given to how they support other less experienced staff to develop this level of professional judgement and decision making.
- xxiii. Employers and commissioners need to provide the conditions, support and learning opportunities for social workers to develop professional judgement. Consideration should be given to how policies, processes and procedures enable and capture sound decision making, and how
- xxiv. Professional judgement can be tested on qualifying programmes both in the classroom and in practice placements (refer to the College of Social Work's placement documentation). Learning and development to support good decision making is a careerlong process, as social worker engage with increasingly complex situations. This requires a range of learning opportunities, and consideration should be given to how to involve adults and carers.
- xxv. Cycle of formal learning linked to the benchmark statements for social work. Emphasis on importance of lawful practice, the concept of personalisation and an understanding of the social work role, task and function. Align with HEI assessment for students. Emphasis on critical application and consolidation of practice.

FOOTNOTES

- XXvi. Focus on independent learning, links to practice, formal organisational training for guidance and processes, regular supervision and reflection, peer support and mentoring. Alignment of learning against the Knowledge and Skills Statement. Support and assessment through Assessed and Supported Year in Employment programme.
- XXvii. Independent learning, formal multi-agency learning opportunities, observed practice, supervision and reflection, leading practice forums, acting as mentor, leading complex cases with support. Critical application and understanding of own practice and of organisational context. This could be monitored through supervision and annual appraisal processes/ systems. Evidenced in portfolio for continuous professional development. Align with Professional Capabilities Framework.
- XXviii. Formal training in specialist area, evaluation of own practice and identification of learning, leading learning opportunities for others, developing own research projects, acting as mentor across agencies, inputting to practice changes. Understanding wider organisation context. This could be monitored through supervision and annual appraisal processes/ systems. Evidenced in portfolio for continuous professional development. Align with Professional Capabilities Framework.
- XXix. Evaluation of own and others' practice, developing and leading learning opportunities, formal training in complex and contested work, leading evaluation and research, independent learning to act as source of expertise. Understanding organisational and national context. This could be monitored through supervision and annual appraisal processes/ systems. Evidenced in portfolio for continuous professional development. Align with Professional Capabilities Framework.
- XXX. Regular updates about national and local changes and priorities from legal experts, formal training in strategic planning and delivery, management and leadership learning opportunities. Understanding organisational and national context. Strategic overview, understanding and management of practice, systems and processes. This could be monitored through supervision and annual appraisal processes/ systems. Evidenced in portfolio for continuous professional development. Align with Professional Capabilities Framework.

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