

A Learning and Development Framework for Council Officers

This Learning and Development Framework has been developed by the West of Scotland Adult Protection Training and Development Forum.

The purpose of the framework is that it should:

- Assist individuals to identify their own learning and development needs
- Assist managers to determine learning and development needs of individuals and groups of staff
- Assist training and development practitioners to design and develop learning opportunities to meet identified learning needs
- Allow existing learning activities to be 'mapped' against the framework, enabling gaps to be identified
- Facilitate comparisons between different approaches to delivery of training and development activities
- Facilitate evaluation of learning and development activities

Council Officers should be able to do the following competently:

- a. Identify, assess and manage adults at risk
- b. Receive and record Adult Protection referrals in accordance with local procedures
- c. Make inquiries under the 2007 Act
- d. Lead adult protection investigations
- e. Comprehensively assess risk in adult protection and develop and implement protection plans to reduce risk and manage uncertainty in complex and dynamic situations.
- f. Contribute to adult protection case conferences
- g. Work with others, especially the adult, to prevent or reduce harm
- h. Secure legal interventions under the Act - warrants and protection orders – to protect adults at risk
- i. Work with those who harm

In order to undertake these functions, Council Officers need to have relevant knowledge and skills and apply appropriate values and ethics. This learning and development framework therefore states the ethical principles which should inform the Council Officer's practice, then maps the knowledge and skills that a practitioner will need to carry out the duties of a Council Officer under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

Values and Ethical Principles

The Council Officer's practice should be informed by the following values and ethical principles:

- A belief that every adult at risk of harm has a right to protection from harm
- A commitment to putting the adult at the centre of decision making and ensuring that any intervention benefits the adult
- Adopting an approach which understands that an adult's rights to protection and to self determination may conflict and endeavour to resolve conflicts in a manner which is proportionate and is the least restrictive necessary to the adult's self determination.
- Recognizing the importance of working in partnership with the adult to ensure that protection measures enable the adult to live their lives fully and safely
- Ensuring that the adult's wishes and feelings and the wishes and feelings of significant others are taken account of and fully considered in assessment and decision making.
- All actions and decisions recognise the adult as an equal citizen and demonstrate anti discriminatory practice, removing barriers to this so that the adult is not treated less favourably than someone in a similar situation but who is not "an adult at risk of harm"
- Promoting the choices and rights of the adult in a way which takes account of their ability, background and characteristics.

Practice Point a.: Identify, assess and manage adults at risk

NB. The legislation requires that individuals must have a minimum of ‘12 months post qualifying experience of identifying, assessing and managing adults at risk’ before they can be authorised to perform the functions of a council officer. (Statutory Instrument NO 306, 2008 – Restriction on the Authorisation of Council Officers).

This first practice point relates to skills, knowledge and values to be developed during this period of experience before the person becomes eligible for authorisation as a council officer. The knowledge, skills and values associated with this practice point are more generic than those in the other practice points and may also be applicable to the wider workforce.

<p>In order to undertake this practice point the Council Officer must understand and be able to apply the following knowledge:</p>	<p>In order to undertake this practice point, the Council Officer needs the following skills:</p>
<p>Legislative duties re reporting Local reporting procedures Information sharing requirements and safeguards</p> <p>Responding to referrals What might constitute a crime Preservation of evidence Communication needs Consent and confidentiality Capacity</p> <p>Role of other agencies</p> <p>Advocacy – general requirements</p> <p>Own agency’s recording system What is significant information to record</p>	<p>Communication skills that enable relevant information sharing within and between agencies using appropriate methods. This will include the ability to present an assessment and argue for a course of action.</p> <p>Cognitive skills to gather, collate, analyse and evaluate information and summarise within a relevant assessment framework. Verbal and non-verbal means of exchanging information, including active listening and use of appropriate tools and resources to enable participation in assessment and decision-making. Relationship skills including the ability to empathise and manage conflict. Organisational skills which enable the planning, monitoring and review of effective interventions.</p> <p>Communication and relationship skills which support effective partnership working. This will include groupworking.</p> <p>Advocacy skills involving the ability to empathise and enable communication and participation.</p> <p>Communication, cognitive and organisational skills that support the recording of necessary and appropriate data, and the correct use of recording systems.</p>

Practice point b.: receive, respond to and record Adult Protection referrals and disclosures in accordance with local procedures

knowledge:	skills:
<p>Legislative context of adult protection – i.e. Adults with Incapacity, Mental Health (care and treatment) and Adult Support and Protection - and other relevant legislation</p> <p>Timescales</p> <p>Data protection legislation</p> <p>Good practice in handling disclosures</p> <p>Factors relevant to capacity and impaired decision making</p> <p>How capacity is assessed – informally, formally and for statutory purposes</p> <p>How to arrange a statutory assessment of capacity</p> <p>Role of Police – investigative, consultative – specific duties and powers</p> <p>Specific responsibilities of other agencies and professionals</p> <p>Complex ethical issues and conflicts re confidentiality and information sharing</p>	<p>Information management skills, including the use of IT systems</p> <p>Planning/Organisational skills</p> <p>Communication and inter-personal skills, including empathy, active listening, counselling and empowerment.</p> <p>Cognitive skills to analyse information using an appropriate assessment framework, e.g. around risk.</p> <p>Communication and inter-personal skills which support participation and partnership working.</p> <p>Empathy, negotiation and conflict management skills</p>

Practice Point c.: Make inquiries under the 2007 Act

knowledge:	skills:
<p>What the legislation says about inquiries How to make inquiries Duties to inquire under other legislation</p> <p>How to support the adult at risk (and carers) during inquiries and possible criminal investigations</p> <p>Role of Care Inspectorate in inquiries</p> <p>Legal requirements and local procedures for recording outcomes of inquiries</p>	<p>Communication skills that enable gathering relevant information in an objective fashion using appropriate methods, verbal/non-verbal; face to face, telephone, using aids.</p> <p>Cognitive skills to gather, collate, analyse and evaluate information and summarise within a relevant assessment framework; make decisions on the basis of weighing up evidence; constructing an argument; and drawing conclusions.</p> <p>Communication skills such as verbal and non-verbal means of exchanging information, including active listening and use of appropriate tools and resources to enable participation in assessment and decision-making. Inter-personal skills including the ability to empathise and manage conflict sensitively. Organisational skills to allow care planning</p> <p>Communication and organisational skills, including information-sharing, negotiation and planning.</p> <p>Recording necessary and relevant information and assessments on appropriate systems and writing a structured report to include relevant evidence, analysis, assessment and conclusion.</p>

Practice Point d.: Lead adult protection investigations

knowledge:	skills:
<p>What the legislation says about investigations and Council Officer’s duties and powers How to conduct an investigation Other relevant legislation</p> <p>The adult’s rights and legislative safeguards Understanding the impact of an investigative visit/interview on the adult and others involved</p> <p>Debates about ‘harm’; ‘serious harm’; ‘undue pressure’; consent and capacity’ and thresholds Impact of harm on adults at risk – how people respond to being harmed</p> <p>How to address specific communication needs – different types of needs, how communication needs might impact on the investigation, how to access communication specialists (eg speech therapists, sign language interpreters etc) How to work with interpreters</p> <p>How to plan an investigation process Purpose & process of Sect 8 interviews Theory of investigative interviewing</p> <p>Council officer’s specific duties re advocacy – its purpose, legal requirements, local provision</p> <p>Purpose of seeking access to records & powers to do so Practicalities of accessing records</p>	<p>Advanced communication and inter-personal skills, particularly including active listening; empathy; investigative interviewing; joint interviewing; negotiating; challenging; managing conflict; communicating through an interpreter or Speech and Language specialist, or using other non-verbal tools and resources; leadership; information sharing; report-writing; presenting</p> <p>Cognitive skills such as reflection and analysis; assessment, evaluation and applying professional judgment to make decisions.</p> <p>Organisational skills, including anticipatory/contingency planning, monitoring and review.</p> <p>Communication and inter-personal skills to support effective partnership working, such as information-sharing, negotiation, mediation, challenging, groupworking.</p> <p>Anti-oppressive practice skills encompassing empathising, empowering, enabling</p> <p>Recording necessary and relevant information and assessments on appropriate systems: this includes contemporary note-taking during interviews and checking views of service users/others are accurately represented within such notes as well as in formal records.</p> <p>Writing a structured report to include relevant evidence, analysis, assessment and conclusion, and the ability to present this report through verbal summary.</p>

<p>Medical examinations Working with health professionals in adult protection situations</p> <p>Local support services –referral processes and what these services offer</p> <p>Good practice in interagency working (at agency level) – theory and evidence, research, report findings Principles of collaborative working at individual worker level Practical knowledge of relevant agencies and services – eg Office of the Public Guardian; Mental Welfare Commission; children and families, housing, criminal justice services etc</p> <p>Importance of eliciting and recording the adult’s own views Local procedures for recording adult protection investigations How to report findings of investigation – verbally & in writing, what & to whom</p>	
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Practice Point e.: Comprehensively assess risk in adult protection and develop and implement protection plans to reduce risk and manage uncertainty in complex and dynamic situations

knowledge:	skills:
<p>Adult Protection Risk factors and indicators How to comprehensively assess risk in Adult Protection situations using appropriate approaches, models and tools Use of chronologies and other recording tools to assist risk assessment and management Benefits of and how to involve the adult in own assessment and management of risk Capacity and risk</p> <p>How to work with uncertainty and reduce risk Approaches to risk (eg risk averse vs positive aspects of risk taking) How to balance risk & protective factors</p> <p>Use of relevant risk assessment tools/reports as an aid to professional judgement Risk reduction/management methods and approaches (eg refer to Domestic Violence protocols)</p>	<p>Advanced communication and interpersonal skills as under requirement (d) in order to gather relevant verbal and non-verbal information using an appropriate practice assessment model; and to enable the adult at risk to participate in information-gathering, assessment and decision-making. The ability to build and manage the relationship with the adult in an uncertain and conflictual environment is essential</p> <p>High level cognitive skills to permit interpretation and analysis of data within a person-centred and historical context; identification of nature, severity, likelihood of negative and positive outcomes and how these can be avoided or promoted.</p> <p>Self awareness and self management skills Anti-oppressive practice skills, including empathy, presentational and advocacy Information-sharing, leadership, negotiation and conflict management skills to support participation and joint decision-making.</p>

Practice Point f.: Contribute to case conferences

knowledge:	skills:
<p>Purpose of case conferences (from literature as well as local procedures) Format and conduct of case conferences</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities – of self and other participants before, during and following the case conference Who should be invited (or not invited) and why</p> <p>The adult’s rights in the case conference process</p> <p>Application of statutory protection measures under the 2007 Act and other legislation Local policy, procedures and practice relating to informal protection measures (eg bogus caller procedures)</p> <p>How to compile a protection plan Format of protection plan Core groups – purpose and practicalities Review requirements & processes</p> <p>Recording requirements for protection plans</p> <p>Arrangements for dealing with dissent, dispute or complaints Timescales</p>	<p>Organisational skills to plan meeting, manage workload, meet timescales</p> <p>Communication and inter-personal skills including -supporting the adult/carers to prepare for and participate in a formal meeting; e.g. exchanging information about rights and the process, empathising, enabling and providing emotional support; anti-oppressive practice skills as before -presentational skills in a formal setting; groupworking; negotiating; dealing with conflict; leadership and using authority.</p> <p>Self awareness and self management skills (emotional intelligence)</p> <p>Advocacy skills</p> <p>Recording relevant information on IT systems and within shared paper-based systems (i.e. the protection plan)</p>

Practice Point g.: Work with others, especially the adult, to prevent or reduce harm

knowledge:	skills:
<p>Legal remedies to protect against domestic abuse and other forms of abuse and harassment</p> <p>Impact of harm – and interventions to prevent harm - on the adult (and sometimes others, eg relatives)</p> <p>Research findings about adults’ views of the adult protection process – and views of relatives and others involved</p> <p>Application of an Outcomes Approach in adult protection</p> <p>How to build adult’s ability to protect themselves</p> <p>Reasons for staying in harmful situations or continuing harmful behaviours</p> <p>How to work with/support adults who chose to stay in harmful situations</p> <p>Personal safety plans and how to assist in their compilation</p>	<p>Cognitive skills including the ability to analyse and apply practice and research evidence; generate alternative courses of action and analyse the viability of such interventions in terms of rights, resources, positive and negative outcomes; reflection and analysis of outcomes (intended and unintended) of interventions.</p> <p>Advanced communication, inter-personal and intervention skills to enable the adult to participate in their protection plan, and learn/practice self-protective strategies; e.g. motivational interviewing, advocacy and enabling, counselling, strength-based practice approaches, joint working with specialist practitioners.</p> <p>Self-awareness and self-management skills (emotional intelligence)</p>

Practice Point h.: Secure legal interventions under the Act – warrants and protection orders – to protect adults at risk

knowledge:	skills:
<p>The legislation re legal interventions Application of the principles of the 2007 Act in relation to seeking legal interventions Local procedures – eg involvement of legal staff Court procedure and ‘etiquette’ Local procedures for taking applications for legal interventions to Court Understanding civil proceedings & what courts will regard as acceptable evidence</p> <p>Gathering and presenting evidence Thresholds – eg harm/serious harm Capacity and consent How to build a case – sometimes over prolonged periods Good professional practice – eg how to demonstrate that all less restrictive options have been considered/tried How to determine ‘undue influence’ Preparation and planning for protection orders – the practicalities and possible outcomes</p> <p>The adults rights – eg to legal representation –when legal interventions are being sought Role of advocacy Rights of others – eg subjects of applications for banning orders Issues and dilemmas re protection orders Understanding the impact legal action may have on those involved Balancing different types of risks and rights</p>	<p>Applying legislation</p> <p>Organisational and Planning skills Interpersonal skills in partnership working and negotiation Communication skills including listening, presentation (in formal situations) and information sharing self awareness and management skills inc presenting with professional confidence, Cognitive skills including assessment, analysis and evaluation, ability to collate evidence and argument-building Written communication skills reflected in the ability to construct a report to accompany an application which presents the evidence relevant to the tests within the Act in a coherent and logical fashion which supports the argument that the Order is required to protect the Adult Collaborative decision making and professional accountability Exercising professional judgement</p> <p>Empathy, empowering, advocacy and general anti-oppressive practice skills</p>

Practice Point i.: Working with those who harm

knowledge:	skills:
<p>Research about who harms and why Research that informs work with perpetrators who have or intend to harm adults at risk Local supports and options for supporting those who harm Criminal justice legislation Local criminal justice services and programmes Other legislation applying to and agencies which work on a statutory basis with people who harm, e.g. criminal justice,</p>	<p>Cognitive and organisational skills inc. information literacy, applying and evaluating research findings, risk assessment, monitoring and review, planning and evaluation, recording and report-writing Communication, interpersonal and intervention skills including Self awareness and management, use of empathy, Advocacy, Motivational, Learning facilitation, Partnership-working, Negotiation, Conflict management</p>