

# ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

Adults and their Carers at the Heart of Practice





# INTRODUCTION

Adult Social Care is part of the People Directorate within Coventry City Council and has a simple vision and strategy which underpins the work of Social Care. All of our work, at whatever level should continue to supporting our strategic intent of 'providing support, in the least intrusive manner possible, based on the assets, resources and abilities that are available to people'.

Essential to the delivery of this is taking 'strength-based' practice approach. Strengths-based approaches are key to effective social work, occupational therapy, social care interventions and achieving the best outcomes for people. In addition, the Care Act 2014 emphasises that local authorities should consider the person's own strengths and capabilities, and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help.

How we expect our staff to operate, the tools they are required to use and the support available in order to deliver positive outcomes for adults and their carers is what our 'Adults and their Carers at the Heart of Practice' framework is produced to do.



In the same way that social work and social care doesn't stand still neither will this practice framework. It will change as our approach develops and staff working within the service, plus feedback from the people that we support will be used to support this ongoing development.

We hope Coventry will be an incredibly rewarding place for practitioners to work for those who want to focus on practice and who are excited by the opportunity to be part of our adult services in one of the most diverse and dynamic cities in the country.

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK?

A practice framework brings together, in an accessible way, an organisation's approach to practice, identifying what underpins the work, how this informs interventions and as an organisation how we support front line practice. However a practice framework can only be effective if it also identifies approaches to understanding the experience of the person receiving any intervention and support.

Through having a clearly defined practice framework we will be able to support the development of high quality practice by providing clear expectations and a framework within which a consistent approach can be applied.

It is however, not a prescriptive set of rules or procedures that deskill and disempower workers. It is instead an underlying ethos to guide everything we do which is flexible and adaptive so that it can work in a place as diverse

as Coventry where every person is different and what might be right for one person may not be right for another.

It has been developed to support workers to use their professional judgement and to spend their time undertaking relationship-based work with adults and their carers that changes lives.



Our practice framework contains four key elements:

- ① Provides clarity on the key focus of Adult Social Care in Coventry
- ② Defines what is expected from practitioners working within Coventry Adult Social Care
- ③ Describes the practice tools that are in place to support practitioners to undertake their role
- ④ Describes how staff are supported by the City Council to deliver good quality social work, occupational therapy and social care

The success of any practice framework is however not tested through the quality of this document. It is tested through the way in which the content of this document is brought to life and evidenced through the many thousands of interactions between social care



professionals and the people we are seeking to support, this is an ongoing matter of personal development, reflection and learning through applying new tools and approaches often in very challenging circumstances.

# THE FOCUS OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN COVENTRY



Adult Social Care in Coventry is simply about working with people to maximise their independence. Our strategy is simple and is as follows:

**'Provide support, in the least intrusive manner possible, based on the assets, resources and abilities that are available to people'**

This is underpinned by a set of values contained and described in the graphic opposite

Although the strategy is simple, implementing it is complex. It requires the people we work with to be challenged on what they can do for themselves and what they can get support for from outside of statutory social care and support services. It means that where people come to us because they believe, or their families, friends or medical professionals believe that they need care, we will challenge

this assumption and, wherever possible work with the person to grow their strengths and capabilities so that the need for ongoing care and support is reduced or eliminated. In general terms we refer to this approach as 'Promoting Independence'.

How we work with individuals and their families and carers from the point of first contact with Adult Social Care is critical to achieving this model – how outcomes are defined, how people are engaged and motivated to improve their independence, how risk is managed and how families, carers and other forms of community support are engaged are all critical to our success and the delivery of improved outcomes for the individual.

## Adult Social Care Vision

To enable people in most need to live independent and fulfilled lives with stronger networks and personalised support.

**Strategy: Provide support, in the least intrusive manner possible, based on the assets, resources and abilities that are available to people.**



**Adults and carers at the heart of everything we do:**  
People we work with are involved as equal partners in planning and decision-making.



**High quality, person centred and effective support:**  
We deliver high quality, person centred effective care and support to service users, their carers and families. Empowering people with the right support, at the right time in the right way using the resources that are available to them.



**Reflective and responsive to change:**  
The support we provide reflects and responds to the changing needs of Coventry's diverse population of adults and older people.



**Outcome driven and meaningful:**  
Support is outcome driven and we are clear about the impact we are having on the people we support.



**Support around people and their families:**  
People are supported to live at home wherever possible. When people cannot live at home they will be supported to live in the most appropriate and least intrusive alternate setting.



**Effective enablement and prevention and wellbeing:**  
We provide support to people in cost effective ways, to enable them to reach or regain their maximum potential so that they can do as much as possible for themselves.



**Mature partnerships:**  
Our partnerships are mature, trusting and effective at both a strategic and operational level. In all our work with partners, the focus remains on the people that need our support.



**Committed workforce:**  
Our workforce is stable, skilled, motivated and committed to delivering excellent services. They feel supported to make decisions, assess and manage risk and work with people to achieve their outcomes.



**Innovative:**  
We will develop new ways of supporting people and use innovation as a key way to deliver good outcomes for people and manage our resources.



**High performing:**  
The outcomes we achieve for adults and older people compare favourably with similar local authorities. We make an active contribution to the delivery of the Council Plan.

Delivering this focus requires the co-ordinated effort of a number of professionals including social workers, occupational therapists and care and support staff plus the work of commissioning colleagues to ensure the market for social care and support has the skills and abilities to deliver this approach with us.

The role of the practitioner is critical to this and the remainder of the practice framework specifies what is expected, the tools and approaches to support these expectations and the support on offer.

As a directorate we will continue to develop new and innovative ways to improve our approach, as well as developing our practice approaches this also includes the options available for people to access and arrange support as well as the support on offer.

Some examples of how we are developing our wider approach includes:

- ⦿ Enhanced use of promoting independence approaches and technology enabled care to support people to remain at home wherever possible and maximize independence
- ⦿ Development of Individual Service Funds (ISFs). ISFs are already providing a number of people with choice and control over their personal budget and we are continuing to expand this approach
- ⦿ Redesigning our pathways and approaches including our first point of contact, social brokerage and community development to ensure a more systematic and strength based approach
- ⦿ A focus on customer experience and development of more 'real time' surveying
- ⦿ Recommissioned voluntary sector organisations to have a focus on prevention and early intervention
- ⦿ Provision of improved information and signposting via an enhanced digital offer
- ⦿ Improved internal forms design and processes reducing time spent in administrative tasks and increasing time available for face to face practice

## WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM PRACTITIONERS WORKING WITHIN COVENTRY ADULT SOCIAL CARE?

In Coventry we expect practitioners to work in a strengths-based way. Strengths-based practice positions the practitioner as supporting people to find their own solutions to their difficulties and the capacity to identify and pursue their own goals.

Practitioners may refer to themselves as strengths-based or as practicing restoratively, or relationally, or systemically. Practitioners in mental health may refer to 'recovery', others may refer to an 'asset-based' approach or 'resilience'. All these ways of working are fundamentally focused on encouraging practitioners to 'work with people, rather than working for them, or doing to them.

The role of our practitioners is therefore to work with people to develop different ways of thinking about their experiences and difficulties, and support change by:

- ⦿ understanding their lived experience as a whole, providing narrative and context around difficulties
- ⦿ identifying and building on individual strengths and assets
- ⦿ building and modelling a trusting and effective positive relationship, based on honesty and openness
- ⦿ supporting social networks and connections between the person, their family and the wider community, supporting resilience through relationship

To work in a strength based way our practitioners need to:

- ⦿ Be professionally curious, hopeful, sensitive, and reflective as well as being tenacious in improving life outcomes for adults and their carers
- ⦿ Approach adults and their carers with empathy, compassion and creativity using strengths, assets and relationships for positive change
- ⦿ To acknowledge where barriers might exist and work closely with families and others to help overcome these
- ⦿ Have a good local knowledge of community assets and see the virtue in new technologies and new ways of working
- ⦿ Use a systemic approach to work purposefully, openly and compassionately with the whole family
- ⦿ Use reflection, critical thinking and analysis to evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence to create meaningful assessments and support plans
- ⦿ Build skilful and influential working relationships with other professionals and agencies

- ⦿ Draw on a range of approaches, used proportionately and regularly reviewed
- ⦿ Make good and emotionally intelligent use of supervision and support of peers
- ⦿ Have high quality planning and decision making skills
- ⦿ Understand their legal and statutory responsibilities
- ⦿ Demonstrate understanding and skill in working as a member of a team and organisation
- ⦿ Take appropriate responsibility for their conduct, practice, learning and development

The role of a social worker, occupational therapist or social care professional is an incredibly difficult one, requiring a range of skills and a firm knowledge base. For us, 'Adults and their Carers at the Heart of Practice' is about ensuring our staff:

- ⦿ Work purposefully with a clear and constant focus on the person their needs, outcomes, experiences, the context and circumstances of their lives
- ⦿ Establish and maintain positive relationships with families and other professionals

- ⦿ Provide evidence informed interventions with adults and their carers that improve lives
- ⦿ Have the skills and knowledge to complete high quality and effective assessments and plans
- ⦿ Have strong report writing skills and good analytic and communication skills
- ⦿ Have an ability to reflect and make good use of supervision.



# THE PRACTICE TOOLS AND APPROACHES THAT ARE IN PLACE TO SUPPORT PRACTITIONERS TO UNDERTAKE THEIR ROLE

We are supporting our practitioners to deliver the requirements of this practice framework through using the following tools and approaches:

- ⦿ Access to training in strength based approaches and outcome-focused support planning and review to embed understanding and application of strength based practice,
- ⦿ Motivational interviewing techniques to develop a focus on strength-based conversations, so people can tell their story in their own words through the use of open questions to encourage reflection
- ⦿ Risk Enablement Panels that support practitioners working with risk through, providing challenge, advice, recommendations and validation when faced with significant risk in order to take a positive approach to risk
- ⦿ Family Group Conferencing (FGC) or family-led meetings, to work with families to support them to come to their own solutions to challenging circumstances, based on the model of FGC often found in children's social work
- ⦿ Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) with a key set of tools and resources to use in working with people at risk of abuse so that they achieve the outcomes they identify.

# HOW STAFF ARE SUPPORTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL TO DELIVER GOOD QUALITY SOCIAL WORK, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND SOCIAL CARE

Supporting practitioners to develop strengths-based practice requires more than skills training for particular activities or techniques, but being part of an organisation that values, promotes and enables strengths-based principles.

We are supporting our practitioners with a clear focus on our practice conditions:

- ⦿ commitment to achievable and effective caseload levels
- ⦿ clearly defined practitioner and team leader standards
- ⦿ effective supervision and support, developing peer, group and reflective supervision models in support of the Standards for Social Work Practice Supervisors in Adult Social Care
- ⦿ a refreshed and continually reviewed learning and development offer with an emphasis on current practice issues
- ⦿ providing access to learning and knowledge resources such as Research in Practice for Adults, Care Knowledge and Social Work Connect
- ⦿ dedicated practitioner roles supporting practice education and newly qualified social workers
- ⦿ established practice forums and organisational health check arrangements
- ⦿ use of practice quality assurance frameworks to ensure we remain focused on practice quality

- ⦿ active engagement with universities through Social Work Teaching Partnerships and involvement in fast track social work schemes
- ⦿ commitment to the National Standards for Employers of Social Workers and the Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy practice
- ⦿ an annual practice week with children's services in which we welcome a range of leading academics and speakers to Coventry to share their expertise
- ⦿ commitment to pre and post qualifying development, including the use of degree-level apprenticeship schemes for social work and occupational therapy

As well as supporting staff in their current role we also want to develop staff to reach their potential. For some people this will mean fulfilling an ambition to progress into more senior practice or management roles but for all it means continuous development to improve and develop better practice skills with adults and their carers.

We are providing training in relation to the tools and approaches used in our practice framework and we have introduced a management and leadership training programme.

There are structured opportunities for career progression in place. We support social workers with post qualifying training to become Practice Educators, Best Interest Assessors, Approved Mental Health Professionals and Sensory Specialists.

We are committed to supporting Degree Level Apprenticeships which enable our unregistered staff to become Social Workers or Occupational Therapists.

The implementation of this framework will be monitored by our Practice Development Forum and the Adult Social Care Management Team.

